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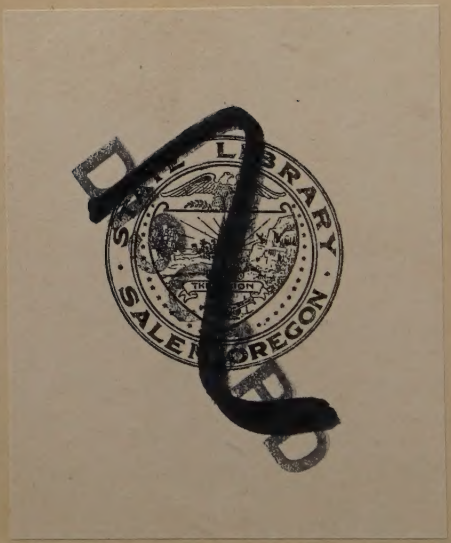
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CERTAIN POETS OF IMPORTANCE

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With a Foreword by
CHARLES G. NORRIS

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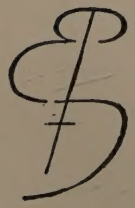

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First Edition

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DEDICATION

"For next thing to being a poet is the power to understand one." LONGFELLOW

To the inspiring life and memory of

MRS. GERTRUDE G. NORRIS

Founder of the San Francisco Browning Society, and for years its literary director.

"Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure."

ROBERT BROWNING

THE VICTORIAN LINE

Lo, in this day we keep the yesterdays,
And those great dead of the Victorian line.
They passed, they passed, but cannot pass away,
For England feels them in her blood like wine.
She was their mother, and she is their daughter,
This lady of the water,
And from their loins she draws the greatness which they were.
And still their wisdom sways,
Their power lives in her.
Their thews it is, England, that lift thy sword,
They are the splendour, England, in thy song,
They sit unbidden at thy council-board,
Their fame doth compass all thy coasts from wrong,
And in thy sinews they are strong.
Their absence is a presence and a guest
In this day's feast;
This living feast is also of the dead,
And this, O England, is thine All Souls' Day.
And when thy cities flake the night with flames,
Thy proudest torches yet shall be their names.

Francis Thompson

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FOREWORD

THIS *volume has been dedicated by its compiler to my mother, Mrs. Gertrude G. Norris. It is a gracious tribute, and I am very proud of it, as she herself would be if she were here today. My mother was an inspiration intellectually to everyone with whom she came in contact. Certainly my brother, Frank, and myself owe our literary inclinations more to her than to anyone else. Loving all literature, she was especially devoted to poetry. I have never met anyone who had more sincere admiration, I may say passion, for poetry than did she. She was ever a student of it, and my earliest memories go back to her reading Shakespeare's plays, which she not only read, but often acted for my benefit. Hers was a marvellous, modulated, trained voice, and often by an inflection she would point a poet's thought and give a significance to his lines that would frequently lead her listeners to believe she had added some words of her own to clarify his meaning. She knew her Shakespeare almost by heart, and I well recall the time when I was still a very small boy, she discovered Robert Browning. A great shining, beautiful light came into her life then, illuminating and enriching it to the end of her days. She was never weary of studying him. Her leather bound volumes of his poetry are lined and interlined with notes and underscorings. Reading him was her delight, and she would turn the pages of his poetry night after night, sitting under the library lamp until often past midnight. It was inevitable that she should wish to share her joy in the great Victorian poet with others, and instinctively she drew about her a group of women who had sufficient intelligence and a love of poetry to appreciate the work of the man she so much admired. It is not an easy matter always to understand Robert Browning. My mother had the necessary*

leisure to pore over his writings, and to unearth his hidden meanings and covert allusions was never work for her. She was eager to show others what she had discovered, and to bring to them some of her own joy in his artistry. I am sure I do not know what else could have filled my mother's life in such a complete and satisfying way as did her Browning Society, which was born of her enthusiasm and thrived on her encouragement. Her sons married and lived far from home; her husband had died years before; my mother was alone, and yet I never knew a happier woman of her age or of her circumstances. Her poetry, her Browning, her deep interest in the society that bore his name, kept her mind active, kept her vitally alive. Two months after her death, when I had finally made a much delayed and harassed voyage home from Brazil, I found among her effects, a dozen large waste baskets in a closet of her hotel apartment, each full to the brim with sheets and half sheets of writing paper, labelled: "Notes of the Browning Society—1912," "Notes of the Browning Society—1913"; each basket had its year. It was her intention, I know, to compile these some day into a book. I would have liked to have carried out her wishes, but alas, no one could have interpreted her unrelated jottings. Only she herself could have made an invaluable and an absorbing book of them.

Of the poetry that fills this volume, there is little I can say. It seems to me that Mrs. Sloss has done a very fine piece of work, and made a much-needed book. There can be no better picture of an age or of a time, than its own literature. "The Golden Age of Poetry," I think someone has called the Victorian period—and here is as perfect a picture of Robert Browning's time and the influences that surrounded and helped to make him what he was, as can be found. He himself read nearly all the poems collected in this volume,—the flower of English poetry. One could hardly do better in seeking a knowledge of poetry, and a cultivation of a better understanding and enjoyment of it, than to do likewise.

CHARLES G. NORRIS.

INTRODUCTION

THIS anthology was made for the San Francisco Browning Society to be used as a study plan in an analysis of the works of the poets who lived and died during the life of Robert Browning. Only one poet who survived Browning is included, and that one, Austin Dobson, becomes one of the group because all his important and significant work was done during that time.

The basic plan of this book is a simple one, though, as far as could be discovered, never used before. The following fifteen outstanding poets of this period were chosen:

Matthew Arnold
Emily Brontë
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Robert Browning
Arthur H. Clough
Austin Dobson
William E. Henley
Charles Kingsley
William Morris
Coventry Patmore
Christina G. Rossetti
Dante G. Rossetti
Robert Louis Stevenson
Algernon Charles Swinburne
Alfred Lord Tennyson

Their expressions on similar subjects, ranging from the simpler themes like those found under the group called "NATURE" to the highest spiritual conceptions found under that of "IMMORTALITY," are placed in juxtaposition for the purpose of comparison.

The idea of publication for general use came after the material had been seen by lovers of poetry, purely for its own sake, to whom the collection appealed as a worthwhile addition to a library, as well as by teachers in universities and schools, who felt it would be of value also to students in English departments. It may prove of use to such students in many ways, only a few of which are suggested: (1) To compare points of general technique, such as, rhythm, choice of verse forms and diction; (2) To determine whether there is a "Zeitgeist" which affects all poets in one era alike; (3) To study why certain subjects inspired these poets at this time; and (4) To analyze how the temperaments of the individual poets reacted to these subjects, as, for example, it develops that Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti were not at all interested in writing poems about children, and that Swinburne and Stevenson were, or that William Morris was tremendously moved to write verse concerning social conditions, whereas, on the contrary, Stevenson and Swinburne were not at all so moved.

In having to pick a few poems out of the wealth of existing material, certain difficult decisions had to be arbitrarily made. The inclusion of the Group "MUSIC," because only that art aroused great interest in all of the poets, though individual ones responded vitally to others,

such as Painting or Sculpture, is a case in point. Also in certain instances the most popular poems on a given subject (as, for example, Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," which would have come under the group "WAR AND PEACE") were deliberately omitted to make room for less usual ones.

Wherever possible in this collection, complete short poems have been chosen, and excerpts from longer ones included only where there were no short ones available.

However, it is not intended to give detailed conclusions here, as we believe with John Drinkwater, who says in his book on "Victorian Poetry"—"Nothing is vainer than for criticism of poetry to suppose that it can give anything of the pleasure to be found in poetry itself."

If this book will serve to stimulate further interest in the poetry of an age which now has taken its immortal place with other ages, or increase here and there the appreciation and love of poetry in general, the compiler of this anthology will be as happy in the publication as she was in doing the work.

H. H. S.

GROUP I

CHILDREN

From The Forsaken Merman

Come away, away, children
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the wind howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,

Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed,
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side——
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a lov'd one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

Matthew Arnold

Child of delight, with sun-bright hair,
And sea-blue, sea-deep, eyes!
Spirit of bliss! What brings thee here
Beneath these sullen skies?

Thou shouldst live in eternal spring,
Where endless day is never dim;
Why, Seraph, has thine erring wing
Wafted thee down to weep with him?

'Ah! not from heaven am I descended,
Nor do I come to mingle tears;
But sweet is day, though with shadows blended;
And, though clouded, sweet are youthful years.

'I—the image of light and gladness——
Saw and pitied that mournful boy,
And I vowed—if need were—to share his sadness,
And give to him my sunny joy.

'Heavy and dark the night is closing;
Heavy and dark may its biding be:
Better for all from grief reposing,
And better for all who watch like me—

'Watch in love by a fevered pillow,
Cooling the fever with pity's balm,
Safe as the petrel on tossing billow,
Safe in mine own soul's golden calm!

'Guardian-angel he lacks no longer;
Evil fortune he need not fear:
Fate is strong, but love is stronger;
And my love is truer than angel-care.'

Emily Brontë

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD

I

They say that God lives very high;
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God; and why?

II

And if you dig down in the mines
You never see Him in the gold;
Though from Him all that's glory shines.

III

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of Heaven and earth across His face—
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

IV

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills, through all things made,
Through sight and sound of every place:

V

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,
Half-waking me at night, and said
"Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.

But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,——
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;

The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

Robert Browning

EARLY POEMS

VIII

O kind protecting Darkness! as a child
Flies back to bury in its mother's lap
His shame and his confusion, so to thee,
O Mother Night, come I! within the folds
Of thy dark robe hide thou me close; for I
So long, so heedless, with external things
Have played the liar, that whate'er I see,
E'en these white glimmering curtains, yon bright stars,
Which to the rest rain comfort down, for me
Smiling those smiles, which I may not return,
Or frowning frowns of fierce triumphant malice,
As angry claimants or expectants sure
Of that I promised and may not perform,
Look me in the face! O hide me, Mother Night!

Arthur Hugh Clough

A FAIRY TALE

"On court, helas! apres la verite;
Ah! croyez-moi, l'erreur a son merite."
VOLTAIRE

Curled in a maze of dolls and bricks
I find Miss Mary, aetat six,
Blonde, Blue-eyed, frank, capricious,
Absorbed in her first fairy book,
From which she scarce can pause to look,
Because it's "so delicious!"

"Such marvels, too. A crystal Boat,
In which they cross a magic Moat,
That's smooth as glass to row on—
A Cat that brings all kinds of things;
And see, the Queen has angel wings—
Then OGRE comes"—and so on.

What trash it is! How sad to find
(Dear Moralist!) the childish mind
So active and so pliant,
Rejecting themes in which you mix
Fond truths and pleasing facts, to fix
On tales of Dwarf and Giant!

In merest prudence men should teach
That cats mellifluous in speech
Are painful contradictions;

That science ranks as monstrous things
Two pairs of upper limbs; so wings—
E'en angels' wings!—are fictions:

That there's no giant now but Steam,
That life, although "an empty dream,"
Is scarce a "land of Fairy."
"Of course I said all this?" Why, no;
Why, no;
I did a thing far wiser, though,—
I read the tale with Mary.

Austin Dobson

HOUSEHOLD ART

"Mine be a cot," for the hours of play,
Of the kind that is built by Miss GREENAWAY;
Where the walls are low, and the roofs are red,
And the birds are gay in the blue o'erhead;
And the dear little figures, in frocks and frills,
Go roaming about at their own sweet wills;
And play with the pups, and reprove the calves,
And do nought in the world (but Work) by halves,
From "Hunt the Slipper" and "Riddle-me-ree"
To watching the cat in the apple-tree.

O Art of the Household! Men may prate
Of their ways "intense" and Italianate,—
They may soar on their wings of sense, and float
To the "au delà" and the dim remote, —
Till the last sun sink in the last-lit West,

"Tis the Art at the Door that will please the best;
To the end of Time 'twill be still the same,
For the Earth first laughed when the children came!

Austin Dobson

MY LITTLE DOLL

I once had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dear,
And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
And I cried for more than a week, dears,
But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day:
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled:
Yet for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

Charles Kingsley

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd,

With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful
art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast molded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
'I will be sorry for their childishness.'

Coventry Patmore

HOLY INNOCENTS

Sleep, little Baby, sleep;
The holy Angels love thee,
And guard thy bed, and keep
A blessed watch above thee.
No spirit can come near
Nor evil beast to harm thee:
Sleep, Sweet, devoid of fear
Where nothing need alarm thee.

The Love which doth not sleep,
The eternal Arms surround thee:
The shepherd of the sheep
In perfect love hath found thee.
Sleep through the holy night,
Christ-kept from snare and sorrow,
Until thou wake to light
And love and warmth to-morrow.

Christina G. Rossetti

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM
From Her Boy

For the long nights you lay awake
And watched for my unworthy sake:
For your most comfortable hand
That led me through the uneven land:
For all the story books you read:
For all the pains you comforted:
For all you pitied, all you bore,

In sad and happy days of yore:—
My second Mother, my first Wife,
The angel of my infant life—
From the sick child, now well and old,
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read
May find as dear a nurse at need,
And every child who lists my rhyme,
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,
May hear it in as kind a voice
As made my childish days rejoice!

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE

When children are playing alone on the green,
In comes the playmate that never was seen.
When children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'Tis he when you play with your soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed.
Bids you go to your sleep and not trouble your head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself!

Robert Louis Stevenson

TO ANY READER

As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees,
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
Another child, far, far away,
And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear; he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
And it is but a child of air
That lingers in the garden there.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A CHILD'S LAUGHTER

All the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells on earth may spring,
All the winds on earth may bring
  All sweet sounds together;
Sweeter far than all things heard,
Hand of harper, tone of bird,
Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
Welling water's winsome word,
  Wind in warm wan weather,

One thing yet there is, that none
Hearing ere its chime be done
Knows not well the sweetest one
Heard of man beneath the sun,
  Hoped in heaven hereafter;
Soft and strong and loud and light,
Very sound of very light
Heard from morning's rosiest height,
When the soul of all delight
  Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
Never forth such notes, nor told
Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
As the radiant mouth of gold
  Here that rings forth heaven.
If the golden-crested wren
Were a nightingale—why, then,

Something seen and heard of men
Might be half as sweet as when
Laughs a child of seven.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

If childhood were not in the world,
But only men and women grown;
No baby-locks in tendrils curled,
No baby-blossoms blown;

Though men were stronger, women fairer,
And nearer all delights in reach,
And verse and music uttered rarer
Tones of more godlike speech;

Though the utmost life of life's best hours
Found, as it cannot now find, words;
Though desert sands were sweet as flowers
And flowers could sing like birds,

But children never heard them, never
They felt a child's foot leap and run:
This were a drearier star than ever
Yet looked upon the sun.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

From SEA DREAMS

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.

Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger,
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger,
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP II

PORTRAITS

Urania

I too have suffer'd; yet I know
She is not cold, though she seems so.
She is not cold, she is not light;
But our ignoble souls lack might.

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,
While we for hopeless passion die;
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,
Were but men nobler than they are.

Eagerly once her gracious ken
Was turned upon the sons of men;
But light the serious visage grew—
She looked, and smiled, and saw them through.

Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our labored, puny passion-fits—
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we
Scorn them as bitterly as she!

Yet show her once, ye heavenly Powers,
One of some worthier race than ours!
One for whose sake she once might prove
How deeply she who scorns can love.

His eyes be like the starry lights;
His voice like sounds of summer nights;
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe!

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And she to him will reach her hand,
And gazing in his eyes will stand,
And know her friend, and weep for glee,
And cry, Long, long I've looked for thee!

Then will she weep—with smiles, till then
Coldly she mocks the sons of men.
Till then her lovely eyes maintain
Their pure, unwavering, deep disdain.

Matthew Arnold

From THE PRISONER

A FRAGMENT

The captive raised her face; it was as soft and mild
As sculptured marble saint, or slumbering unwean'd child;
It was so soft and mild, it was so sweet and fair,
Pain could not trace a line, nor grief a shadow there!

Emily Brontë

From TWO SKETCHES

The shadow of her face upon the wall
May take your memory to the perfect Greek,
But when you front her, you would call the cheek
Too full, sir, for your models, if withal
That bloom it wears could leave you critical,
And that smile reaching toward the rosy streak;
For one who smiles so has no need to speak

To lead your thoughts along, as steed to stall.
A smile that turns the sunny side o' the heart
On all the world, as if herself did win
By what she lavished on an open mart!
Let no man call the liberal sweetness, sin,—
For friends may whisper as they stand apart,
"Methinks there's still some warmer place within."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

MY KATE

I

She was not as pretty as women I know,
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow
Drop to shade, melt to naught in the long trodden ways,
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—
My Kate.

II

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace;
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face:
And when you had once seen her forehead and mouth,
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth—
My Kate.

III

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone—
My Kate.

IV

I doubt if she said to you much that could act
As a thought or suggestion: she did not attract
In the sense of the brilliant or wise: I infer
'Twas her thinking of others made you think of her—
My Kate.

V

She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown—
My Kate.

VI

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;
They knelt more to God than they used,—that was all:
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you meant,
But the charm of her presence was felt when she went—
My Kate.

VII

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,
She took as she found them, and did them all good;
It always was so with her—see what you have!
She has made the grass greener even here . . . with her grave—
My Kate.

VIII

My dear one! when thou wast alive with the rest,
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best:
And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part
As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart—
My Kate.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

A FACE

If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mould
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft
In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burden of honey-colored buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.
Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb:
But these are only massed there, I should think,
Waiting to see some wonder momently
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),

All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

Robert Browning

MY LAST DUCHESS

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad.
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,

The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know now how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity.
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Robert Browning

From MARI MAGNO

An English clergyman came spick and span
In black and white—a large well-favoured man,
Fifty years old, as near as one could guess.
He looked the dignitary more or less.
A rural dean, I said, he was, at least,
Canon perhaps; at many a good man's feast
A guest had been, amongst the choicest there.
Manly his voice and manly was his air:
At the first sight you felt he had not known
The things pertaining to his cloth alone.
Chairman of Quarter Sessions had he been?
Serious and calm, 'twas plain he much had seen,
Had miscellaneous large experience, had
Of human acts, good, half and half, and bad.
Serious and calm, yet lurked, I know not why,
At times, a softness in his voice and eye.
Some shade of ill a prosperous life had crossed;
Married no doubt: a wife or child had lost?
He never told us why he passed the sea.

My guardian friend was now, at thirty-three,
A rising lawyer—ever, at the best,
Slow rises worth in lawyer's gown compressed;
Succeeding now, yet just, and only just,
His new success he never seemed to trust.
By nature he to gentlest thoughts inclined,
To most severe had disciplined his mind;
He held it duty to be half unkind.
Bitter, they said, who but the exterior knew,
In friendship never was a friend so true:

The unwelcome fact he did not shrink to tell,
The good, if fact, he recognised as well.
Stout to maintain, if not the first to see;
In conversation who so great as he?
Leading but seldom, always sure to guide,
To false or silly, if 'twas borne aside,
His quick correction silent he expressed,
And stopped you short, and forced you to your best.
Often, I think, he suffered from some pain
Of mind, that on the body worked again;
One felt it in his sort of half-disdain,
Impatient not, but acrid in his speech;
The world with him her lesson failed to teach
To take things easily and let them go.

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE MILKMAID

A new song to an old tune

Across the grass I see her pass;
She comes with tripping pace,—
A maid I know,—and March winds blow
Her hair across her face;—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

The March winds blow. I watch her go:
Her eye is brown and clear;

Her cheek is brown, and soft as down,
(To those who see it near!)
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

What has she not that those have got,—
The dames that walk in silk!
If she undo her kerchief blue,
Her neck is white as milk.
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Let those who will be proud and chill!
For me, from June to June,
My Dolly's words are sweet as curds
Her laugh is like a tune;—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Break, break to hear, O crocus-spear!
O tall Lent-lilies flame!
There'll be a bride at Easter-tide,
And Dolly is her name.
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,

Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Austin Dobson

TO A GREEK GIRL

With breath of thyme and bees that hum,
Across the years you seem to come,—
Across the years with nymph-like head,
And wind-blown brows unfilleted;
A girlish shape that slips the bud
In lines of unspoiled symmetry;
A girlish shape that stirs the blood
With pulse of Spring, Autonoë!

Where'er you pass,—where'er you go,
I hear the pebbly rillet flow;
Where'er you go,—where'er you pass,
There comes a gladness on the grass;
You bring blithe airs where'er you tread,—
Blithe airs that blow from down and sea;
You wake in me a Pan not dead,—
Not wholly dead!—Autonoë!

How sweet with you on some green sod
To wreathe the rustic garden-god;
How sweet beneath the chestnut's shade
With you to weave a basket-braid;
To watch across the stricken chords
Your rosy-twinkling fingers flee;
To woo you on soft woodland words,
With woodland pipe, Autonoë!

In vain,—in vain! The years divide;
Where Thamis rolls a murky tide,
I sit and fill my painful reams,
And see you only in my dreams; —
A vision, like Alcestis, brought
From under-lands of Memory,—
A dream of Form in days of Thought,—
A dream,—a dream, Autonoë!

Austin Dobson.

From ECHOES

Appendix

The pretty washermaiden,
She washes on always!
And as she rubs, and as she wrings,
Her shapely body sways and springs
As if to burst her stays.

Her cheek is rich and shining
And brown as any egg,
And, when she dives into her tub
To duck the linen she's to scrub,
She shows the neatest leg!

Her round arms white with lather,
Her elbows fresh and red,
Her mouth the rosiest of buds,
Who would not risk a shower of suds
To kiss her dainty head?

William E. Henley.

IN HOSPITAL—CLINICAL

X

STAFF NURSE: NEW STYLE

Blue-eyed and bright of face but waning fast
Into the sere of virginal decay,
I view her as she enters, day by day,
As a sweet sunset almost overpast.
Kindly and calm, patrician to the last,
Superbly falls her gown of sober gray,
And on her chignon's elegant array
The plainest cap is somehow touched with caste.
She talks Beethoven; frowns disapprobation
At Balzac's name, sighs it at 'poor George Sand's';
Knows that she has exceeding pretty hands;
Speaks Latin with a right accentuation;
And gives at need (as one who understands)
Draught, counsel, diagnosis, exhortation.

William E. Henley

SAPPHO

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff;
Above her glared the noon; beneath, the sea.
Upon the white horizon Atho's peak
Weltered in burning haze; all airs were dead;
The cicale slept among the tamarisk's hair;
The birds sat dumb and drooping. Far below
The lazy sea-weed glistened in the sun;

The lazy sea-fowl dried their steaming wings;
The lazy swell crept whispering up the ledge,
And sank again. Great Pan was laid to rest;
And Mother Earth watched by him as he slept,
And hushed her myriad children for a while.
She lay among the myrtles on the cliff;
And sighed for sleep, for sleep that would not hear,
But left her tossing still; for night and day
A mighty hunger yearned within her heart,
Till all her veins ran fever; and her cheek,
Her long thin hands, and ivory-channelled feet,
Were wasted with the wasting of her soul.
Then peevishly she flung her on her face,
And hid her eyeballs from the blinding glare,
And fingered at the grass, and tried to cool
Her crisp hot lips against the crisp hot sward:
And then she raised her head, and upward cast
Wild looks from homeless eyes, whose liquid light
Cleaned out between deep folds of blue-black hair,
As gleam twin lakes between the purple peaks
Of deep Parnassus, at the mournful moon.
Beside her lay her lyre. She snatched the shell,
And waked wild music from its silver strings;
Then tossed it sadly by—'Ah, hush!' she cries;
'Dead offspring of the tortoise and the mine!
Why mock my discords with thine harmonies?
Although a thrice-Olympian lot be thine,
Only to echo back in every tone
The moods of nobler natures than thine own.'

Charles Kingsley

PRAISE OF MY LADY

My lady seems of ivory
Forehead, straight nose, and cheeks that be
Hollowed a little mournfully.
Beata mea Domina!

Her forehead, overshadowed much
By bows of hair, has a wave such
As God was good to make for me.
Beata mea Domina!

Not greatly long my lady's hair,
Nor yet with yellow color fair,
But thick and crisped wonderfully:
Beata mea Domina!

Heavy to make the pale face sad,
And dark, but dead as though it had
Been forged by God most wonderfully
Beata mea Domina!

Of some strange metal, thread by thread,
To stand out from my lady's head,
Not moving much to tangle me.
Beata mea Domina!

Beneath her brows the lids fall slow,
The lashes a clear shadow throw
Where I would wish my lips to be.
Beata mea Domina!

Her great eyes, standing far apart,
Draw up some memory from her heart,
And gaze out very mournfully;
Beata mea Domina!

So beautiful and kind they are,
But most times looking out afar,
Waiting for something, not for me.
Beata mea Domina!

I wonder if the lashes long
Are those that do her bright eyes wrong,
For always half tears seem to be
Beata mea Domina!

Lurking below the underlid,
Darkening the place where they lie hid:
If they should rise and flow for me!
Beata mea Domina!

Her full lips being made to kiss,
Curled up and pensive each one is;
This makes me faint to stand and see.
Beata mea Domina!

Her lips are not contented now,
Because the hours pass so slow
Towards a sweet time: (pray for me),
Beata mea Domina!

Nay, hold thy peace! for who can tell?
But this at least I know full well,

Her lips are parted longingly
Beata mea Domina!

So passionate and swift to move,
To pluck at any flying love,
That I grow faint to stand and see.
Beata mea Domina!

Yea! there beneath them is her chin,
So fine and round, it were a sin
To feel no weaker when I see
Beata mea Domina!

God's dealings; for with so much care
And troublous, faint lines wrought in there,
He finishes her face for me.
Beata mea Domina!

Of her long neck what shall I say?
What things about her body's sway,
Like a night's pennon or slim tree.
Beata mea Domina!

Set gently waving in the wind;
Or her long hands that I may find
On some day sweet to move o'er me,
Beata mea Domina!

God pity me though, if I missed
The telling, how along her wrist
The veins creep, dying languidly
Beata mea Domina!

Inside her tender palm and thin.
Now give me pardon, dear, wherein
My voice is weak and vexes thee.
Beata mea Domina!

All men that see her any time,
I charge you straightly in this rhyme,
What, and wherever you may be,
Beata mea Domina!

To kneel before her; as for me
I choke and grow quite faint to see
My lady moving graciously.
Beata mea Domina!

William Morris

From THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

THE COUNTY BALL

But there danced she, who from the leaven
Of ill preserv'd my heart and wit
All unawares, for she was heaven,
Others at best but fit for it.
One of those lovely things she was
In whose least action there can be
Nothing so transient but it has
An air of immortality.
I mark'd her step, with peace elate,
Her brow more beautiful than morn,
Her sometime look of girlish state
Which sweetly waived its right to scorn;

The giddy crowd, she grave the while,
  Although, as 'twere beyond her will,
Around her mouth the baby smile,
  That she was born with, linger'd still.
Her ball-dress seem'd a breathing mist,
  From the fair form exhaled and shed,
Raised in the dance with arm and wrist
  All warmth and light, unbraceleted.
Her motion, feeling 'twas beloved,
  The pensive soul of tune express'd,
And, oh, what perfume, as she moved,
  Came from the flowers in her breast!

Coventry Patmore

IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO

One face looks out from all his canvases,
  One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:
  We found her hidden just behind those screens,
That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
  A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,
  A saint, an angel—every canvas means
The same one meaning, neither more nor less.
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
  And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
  Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;
  Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

Christina G. Rossetti

VALENTINES TO MY MOTHER

My blessed Mother dozing in her chair
  On Christmas Day seemed an embodied Love,
A comfortable Love with soft brown hair
  Softened and silvered to a tint of dove;
A better sort of Venus with an air
  Angelical from thoughts that dwell above;
A wiser Pallas in whose body fair
  Enshrined a blessed soul looks out thereof.
Winter brought holly then; now Spring has brought
  Paler and frailer snowdrops shivering;
And I have brought a simple humble thought—
I her devoted duteous Valentine—
  A lifelong thought which thrills this song I sing,
A lifelong love to this dear Saint of mine.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

THE PORTRAIT

O Lord of all compassionate control,
  O Love! let this my lady's picture glow
  Under my hand to praise her name, and show
Even of her inner self the perfect whole:
That he who seeks her beauty's furthest goal,
  Beyond the light that the sweet glances throw
  And refluent wave of the sweet smile, may know
The very sky and sea-line of her soul.

Lo! it is done. Above the long lithe throat
The mouth's mould testifies of voice and kiss
The shadowed eyes remember and foresee.
Her face is made her shrine. Let all men note
That in all years (O Love, thy gift is this!)
They that would look on her must come to me.

D. G. Rossetti

KATHARINE

We see you as we see a face
That trembles in a forest place
Upon the mirror of a pool
Forever quiet, clear and cool;
And in the wayward glass, appears
To hover between smiles and tears,
Elfin and human, airy and true,
And backed by the reflected blue.

Robert Louis Stevenson

MADONNA MIA

Under green apple boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
  Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand;
In all the great green land
  None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
  Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
  Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,
Love, swift to wake, to weep,
  To laugh, to gaze;
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
  In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
  Her joys from these;

In the deep-feathered firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
  Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
  And is not sad;
The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes;
None knows her, weak or wise,
  Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
  Wherein time grows,
What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,—
  Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said;
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
  And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
  And various vine.

This is my lady's praise;
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
  In sunset lands;
This was my lady's birth;
God gave her might and mirth.
And laid his whole sweet earth
  Between her hands.

Under deep apple boughs
My lady hath her house,
She wears upon her brows
  The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
  Being strong as love.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

ALBERT THE GOOD

We know him now: all narrow jealousies
Are silent; and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplished, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of winged ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure; but through all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,

Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne
And blackens every blot.

From Dedication to
The Idylls of the King
Alfred Lord Tennyson

A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty; that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by:
And with a sweeping of the arm
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,

And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself, himself did feed:
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP III

TRIBUTES

Shakespeare

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst tread on Earth unguess'd at. Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in the victorious brow.

Matthew Arnold

Rachel

III

Sprung from the blood of Israel's scatter'd race,
At a mean inn in German Aarau born,
To forms from antique Greece and Rome uptorn,
Trick'd out with a Parisian speech and face,

Imparting life renew'd, old classic grace;
Then, soothing with thy Christian strain forlorn,

A-Kempis! her departing soul outworn,
While by her bedside Hebrew rites have place—

Ah, not the radiant spirit of Greece alone
She had—one power, which made her breast its home!
In her, like us, there clash'd, contending powers,

Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome.
The strife, the mixture in her soul, are ours;
Her genius and her glory are her own.

Matthew Arnold

STANZAS TO ——

Well, some may hate, and some may scorn,
  And some may quite forget thy name;
But my sad heart must ever mourn
  Thy ruined hopes, thy blighted fame!
'Twas thus I thought, an hour ago,
Even weeping o'er that wretch's woe;
One word turned back my gushing tears,
And lit my altered eye with sneers.
Then 'Bless the friendly dust,' I said,
'That hides thy unlamented head!
Vain as thou wert, and weak as vain,
The slave of Falsehood, Pride, and Pain—
My heart has nought akin to thine;
Thy soul is powerless over mine.'

But these were thoughts that vanished too;
Unwise, unholy, and untrue:

Do I despise the timid deer,
Because his limbs are fleet with fear?
Or, would I mock the wolf's death-howl,
Because his form is gaunt and foul?
Or, hear with joy the leveret's cry,
Because it cannot bravely die?
No! Then above his memory
Let Pity's heart as tender be;
Say, 'Earth, lie lightly on that breast,
And, kind Heaven, grant that spirit rest!'

Emily Brontë

TO GEORGE SAND

A Desire

Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man,
Self-called George Sand! whose soul, amid the lions
Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance
And answers roar for roar, as spirits can:
I would some mild miraculous thunder ran
Above the applauded circus, in appliance
Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,
Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,
From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place
With holier light! that thou to woman's claim
And man's, mightst join beside the angel's grace
Of a pure genius sanctified from blame,
Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace
To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From THE RING AND THE BOOK

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

Robert Browning

MEMORABILIA

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
  And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
  How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
  And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at—
  My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
  And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
  'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather,
  And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather!
  Well, I forget the rest.

Robert Browning

WRITTEN ON A BRIDGE

When soft September brings again
  To yonder gorse its golden glow,
And Snowdon sends its autumn rain
  To bid thy current livelier flow;
Amid that ashen foliage light
When scarlet beads are glistering bright,

While alder boughs unchanged are seen
In summer livery of green;
When clouds before the cooler breeze
Are flying, white and large; with these
Returning, so may I return,
And find thee changeless, Pont-y-wern.

Arthur Hugh Clough

FOR A COPY OF THEOCRITUS

(C. 270 B.C.)

O Singer of the field and fold,
Theocritus! Pan's pipe was thine,—
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

For thee the scent of new-turned mold,
The bee-hives, and the murmuring pine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

Thou sang'st the simple feasts of old,—
The beechen bowl made glad with wine . . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Thou bad'st the rustic loves be told,—
Thou bad'st the tuneful reeds combine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

And round thee, ever-laughing, rolled
The blithe and blue Sicilian brine . . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Alas for us! Our songs are cold;
Our Northern suns too sadly shine:—
O Singer of the field and fold,
Thine was the happier Age of Gold!

Austin Dobson

ECHOES—XXXVII

To W. A.

Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a King in Babylon
And you were a Christian Slave.

I saw, I took, I cast you by,
I bent and broke your pride.
You loved me well, or I heard them lie,
But your longing was denied.
Surely I knew that by and by
You cursed your gods and died.

And a myriad suns have set and shone
Since then upon the grave
Decreed by the King in Babylon
To her that had been his Slave.

The pride I trampled is now my scathe,
For it tramples me again.
The old resentment lasts like death,
For you love, yet you refrain.

I break my heart on your hard unfaith,
And I break my heart in vain.

Yet not for an hour do I wish undone
The deed beyond the grave,
When I was a King in Babylon
And you were a Virgin Slave.

William E. Henley

TO MISS MITFORD

Authoress of 'Our Village'

The single eye, the daughter of the light;
Well pleased to recognise in lowliest shade
Some glimmer of its parent beam, only bright, and made
By daily draughts of brightness,
The taste severe, yet graceful, trained aright
In classic depth and clearness, and repaid
By thanks and honour from the wise and staid—
By pleasant skill to blame, and yet delight,
And high communion with the eloquent throng
Of those who purified our speech and song—
All these are yours. The same examples lure,
You in each woodland, me on breezy moor—
With kindred aim the same sweet path along,
To knit in loving knowledge rich and poor.

Charles Kingsley

TO ATALANTA *from* THE EARTHLY PARADISE

She seemed all earthly matters to forget;
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear,
Her wide gray eyes upon the goal were set
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near;
But her foe trembled as a man in fear,
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

William Morris

From THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

Prelude to THE MORNING CALL

Tribute to Womankind

Boon Nature to the woman bows;
She walks in earth's whole glory clad,
And, chiefest far herself of shows,
All others help her, and are glad;
No splendour 'neath the sky's proud dome
But serves for her familiar wear;
The far-fetch'd diamond finds its home
Flashing and smouldering in her hair;
For her the seas their pearls reveal;
Art and strange lands her pomp supply
With purple, chrome, and cochineal,
Ochre, and lapis lazuli;
The worm its golden wood presents;
Whatever runs, flies, dives, or delves,
All doff for her their ornaments,
Which suit her better than themselves;

And all, by this their power to give,
Proving her right to take, proclaim
Her beauty's clear prerogative
To profit so by Eden's blame.

Coventry Patmore

ALICE

Dancing on the hill-tops,
Singing in the valleys,
Laughing with the echoes,
Merry little Alice.

Playing games with lambkins
In the flowering valleys,
Gathering pretty posies,
Helpful little Alice.

If her father's cottage
Turned into a palace,
And he owned the hill-tops
And the flowering valleys,
She'd be none the happier,
Happy little Alice.

Christina G. Rossetti

PANDORA

(*For a Picture*)

What of the end, Pandora? Was it thine,
The deed that set these fiery pinions free?
Ah! wherefore did the Olympian consistory

In its own likeness make thee half divine?
Was it that Juno's brow might stand a sign
For ever? and the mien of Pallas be
A deadly thing? and that all men might see
In Venus' eyes the gaze of Proserpine?

What of the end? These beat their wings at will,
The ill-born things, the good things turned to ill,—
Powers of the impassioned hours prohibited.
Aye, hug the casket now! Whither they go
Thou mayst not dare to think: nor canst thou know
If Hope still pent there be alive or dead.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

To W. E. HENLEY

The year runs through her phases; rain and sun,
Springtime and summer pass; winter succeeds;
But one pale season rules the house of death.
Cold falls the imprisoned daylight; fell disease
By each lean pallet squats, and pain and sleep
Toss gaping on the pillows.

But O thou!
Uprise and take thy pipe. Bid music flow,
Strains by good thoughts attended, like the spring
The swallows follow over land and sea.
Pain sleeps at once; at once, with open eyes,
Dozing despair awakes. The shepherd sees
His flock come bleating home; the seaman hears
Once more the cordage rattle. Airs of home!
Youth, love and roses blossom; the gaunt ward

Dislimns and disappears, and, opening out,
Shows brooks and forests, and the blue beyond
Of mountains.

Small the pipe; but O! do thou,
Peak-faced and suffering piper, blow therein
The dirge of heroes dead; and to these sick,
These dying, sound the triumph over death.
Behold! each greatly breathes; each tastes a joy
Unknown before, in dying; for each knows
A hero dies with him—though unfulfilled,
Yet conquering truly—and not dies in vain.

So is pain cheered, death comforted; the house
Of sorrow smiles to listen. Once again—
O thou, Orpheus and Heracles, the bard
And the deliverer, touch the stops again!

Robert Louis Stevenson

TO MOTHER MARYANNE

To see the infinite pity of this place,
The mangled limb, the devastated face,
The innocent sufferer smiling at the rod—
A fool were tempted to deny his God.
He sees, he shrinks. But if he gaze again,
Lo, beauty springing from the breast of pain!
He marks the sisters on the mournful shores;
And even a fool is silent and adores.

Robert Louis Stevenson

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, follow'd one with love and each with wonder:
The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,
Cloth'd with loud words and mantled in the might
Of darkness and magnificence of night;
And one whose eye could smite the night in sunder,
Searching if light or no light were thereunder,
And found in love of loving-kindness light.
Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire
Still following Righteousness with deep desire
Shone sole and stern before her and above,
Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more sweet
Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet,
The light of little children, and their love.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Crowned, girdled, garbed and shod with light and fire;
Son first-born of the morning, sovereign star!
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled quire
Where all ye sang together, all that are,
And all the starry songs behind thy car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim the sire.
'If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,'

And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were impelled
Toward one great end, thy glory—nay, not then,
Not yet might'st thou be praised enough of men.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

TO THE QUEEN

Revered, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness, May you rule us long.

And leave us rulers of your blood
  As noble till the latest day!
  May children of our children say
'She wrought her people lasting good;

'Her court was pure; her life serene;
  God gave her peace; her land reposed,
  A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife and Queen;

'And statesmen at her council met
  Who knew the seasons when to take
  Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet.

'By shaping some august decree,
  Which kept her throne unshaken still,
  Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP IV

MUSIC

The Voice

As the kindling glances,
Queen-like and clear,
Which the bright moon lances
From her tranquil sphere
At the sleepless waters
Of a lonely mere,
On the wild whirling waves, mournfully, mournfully,
Shiver and die.

As the tears of sorrow
Mothers have shed—
Prayers that to-morrow
Shall in vain be sped
When the flower they flow for
Lies frozen and dead—
Fall on the throbbing brow, fall on the burning breast,
Bringing no rest.

Like bright waves that fall
With a lifelike motion
On the lifeless margin of the sparkling Ocean;
A wild rose climbing up a mouldering wall—
A gush of sunbeams through a ruin'd hall—

Strains of glad music at a funeral—
So sad, and with so wild a start

To this deep-sober'd heart,
So anxiously and painfully,
So drearily and doubtfully,
And oh, with such intolerable change
Of thought, such contrast strange,
O unforgotten voice, thy accents come,
Like wanderers from the world's extremity,
Unto their ancient home!

In vain, all, all in vain,
They beat upon mine ear again,
Those melancholy tones so sweet and still.
Those lute-like tones which in the bygone year
Did steal into mine ear —
Blew such a thrilling summons to my will,
Yet could not shake it;
Made my tost heart its very life-blood spill,
Yet could not break it.

Matthew Arnold

THE LADY TO HER GUITAR

For him who struck thy foreign string,
I ween this heart has ceased to care;
Then why dost thou such feelings bring
To my sad spirit—old Guitar?

It is as if the warm sunlight
In some deep glen should lingering stay,
When clouds of storm, or shades of night,
Have wrapt the parent orb away.

It is as if the glassy brook
  Should image still its willows fair,
Though years ago the woodman's stroke
  Laid low in dust their Dryad-hair.

Even so, Guitar, thy magic tone
  Hath moved the tear and waked the sigh;
Hath bid the ancient torrent moan,
  Although its very source is dry.

Emily Brontë

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
  Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
  With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
  From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
  Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
  While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,

Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan,
(Laughed while he sat by the river,)
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From ABT VOGLER

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is naught:
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and bow the head!

* * * * * *

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 't is we musicians know.

Robert Browning

From PAULINE

For music (which is earnest of a heaven,
Seeing we know emotions strange by it,
Not else to be revealed,) is like a voice,
A low voice calling fancy, as a friend,
To the green woods in the gay summer time:
And she fills all the way with dancing shapes
Which have made painters pale, and they go on
Till stars look at them and winds call to them
As they leave life's path for the twilight world
Where the dead gather.

Robert Browning

From THE MUSIC OF THE WORLD AND OF THE SOUL

II

Are there not, then, two musics unto men?—
  One loud and bold and coarse,
  And overpowering still perforce
  All tone and tune beside;
  Yet in despite its pride
Only of fumes of foolish fancy bred,
And sounding solely in the sounding head:
  The other, soft and low,
  Stealing, whence we not know,
Painfully heard, and easily forgot,
With pauses oft and many a silence strange
(And silent oft it seems, when silent it is not),

Revivals too of unexpected change:
Haply thou think'st 'twill never be begun,
Or that it has come, and been, and passed away:
  Yet turn to other none,—
  Turn not, oh, turn not thou!
But listen, listen, listen,—if haply be heard it may;
Listen, listen, listen,—is it not sounding now?

III

Yea, and as thought of some departed friend
By death or distance parted will descend,
Severing, in crowded rooms ablaze with light,
As by a magic screen, the seer from the sight
(Palsying the nerves that intervene
The eye and central sense between);
  So may the ear,
  Hearing not hear,
Though drums do roll, and pipes and cymbals ring;
So the bare conscience of the better thing
Unfelt, unseen, unimaged, all unknown,
May fix the entrancèd soul 'mid multitudes alone.

Arthur Hugh Clough

WITH PIPE AND FLUTE

With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man;
  And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
  And closer drew the calm-eyed herd,—
The rolling river slowlier ran.

Ah! would,—ah! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
  This age of ours, too seldom stirred
    With pipe and flute!

But now for gold we plot and plan;
And, from Beersheba unto Dan,
  Apollo's self might pass unheard,
  Or find the night-jar's note preferred;—
Not so it fared, when time began,
    With pipe and flute!

Austin Dobson

IN HOSPITAL—MUSIC

Down the quiet eve,
Thro' my window with the sunset
Pipes to me a distant organ
Foolish ditties;

And, as when you change
Pictures in a magic lantern,
Books, beds, bottles, floor, and ceiling
Fade and vanish.

And I'm well once more . . .
August flares adust and torrid,
But my heart is full of April
Sap and sweetness.

In the quiet eve
I am loitering, long, dreaming . . .

Dreaming, and a distant organ
Pipes me ditties.

I can see the shop,
I can smell the sprinkled pavement,
Where she serves—her chestnut-chignon
Thrills my senses!

O, the sight and scent,
Wistful eve and perfumed pavement!
In the distance pipes an organ . . .
The sensation

Comes to me anew,
And my spirit for a moment
Thro' the music breathes the blessed
Airs of London.

William E. Henley

A FAREWELL

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand, sweet song.

Charles Kingsley

Introduction to THE EARTHLY PARADISE

Of Heaven or hell I have no power to sing;
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth,
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die,—
Remember me a little then, I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names remembered,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an idle day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
Telling a tale not too importunate

To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folks say, a wizard to a northern king
  At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
That through one window men beheld the spring,
  And through another saw the summer glow,
  And through a third the fruited vines arow,
While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
  If ye will read aright, and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
  Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
  Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

William Morris

PROPHETS WHO CANNOT SING

  Ponder, ye Just, the scoffs that frequent go
From forth the foe:
  'The holders of the Truth in Verity
Are people of a harsh and stammering tongue!
The hedge-flower hath its song;
Meadow and tree,
Water and wandering cloud
Find Seers who see,
And, with convincing music clear and loud,

Startle the adder-deafness of the crowd
By tones, O love, from thee.
Views of the unveil'd heavens alone forth bring
Prophets who cannot sing,
Praise that in chiming numbers will not run;
At least, from David until Dante, none,
And none since him.
Fish, and not swim?
They think they somehow should, and so they try
But (haply 'tis they screw the pitch too high)
'Tis still their fates
To warble tunes that nails might draw from slates.
Poor Seraphim!
They mean to spoil our sleep, and do, but all their gains
Are curses for their pains!'
  Now who but knows
That truth to learn from foes
Is wisdom ripe?
Therefore no longer let us stretch our throats
Till hoarse as frogs
With straining after notes
Which but to touch would burst an organ-pipe.
Far better be dumb dogs.

Coventry Patmore

A HOPE CAROL

A Night was near, a day was near;
  Between a day and night
I heard sweet voices calling clear,
  Calling me;

I heard a whirr of wing on wing,
  But could not see the sight:
I long to see the birds that sing,
  I long to see.

Below the stars, beyond the moon,
  Between the night and day,
I heard a rising falling tune
  Calling me:
I long to see the pipes and strings
  Whereon such minstrels play;
I long to see each face that sings,
  I long to see.

To-day or may be not to-day,
  To-night or not to-night,
All voices that command or pray,
  Calling me,
Shall kindle in my soul such fire
  And in my eyes such light
That I shall see that heart's desire
  I long to see.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE MONOCHORD

(*Written during Music*)

Is it the moved air or the moving sound
  That is Life's self and draws my life from me,
  And by instinct ineffable decree
Holds my breath quailing on the bitter bound?

Nay, is it Life or Death, thus thunder-crown'd,
  That 'mid the tide of all emergency
  Now notes my separate wave, and to what sea
Its difficult eddies labour in the ground?

Oh! what is this that knows the road I came,
The flame turned cloud, the cloud returned to flame,
  The lifted shifted steeps and all the way?—
That draws round me at last this wind-warm space,
And in regenerate rapture turns my face
  Upon the devious coverts of dismay?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

SINGING

Of speckled eggs the birdie sings
  And nests among the trees;
The sailor sings of ropes and things
  In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,
  The children sing in Spain;
The organ with the organ man
  Is singing in the rain.

SONGS OF TRAVEL

XV

Bright is the ring of words
  When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
  When the singer sings them.

Still they are carolled and said—
On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE ROUNDEL

A Roundel is wrought as a ring or a star-bright sphere,
With craft of delight and with cunning of sound unsought,
That the heart of the hearer may smile if to pleasure his ear
A roundel is wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of aught—
Love, laughter or mourning, remembrance of rapture or fear—
That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the hearts in us hear

Pause answer to pause, and again the same strain caught,
So moves the device whence, round as a pearl or tear,
A roundel is wrought.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

CHORIC SONG *from* THE LOTOS-EATERS

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

FAR—FAR—AWAY

(*For Music*)

What sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lane-lone of evening bells
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy
Far—far—away.

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far—far—away.

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of Birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far—far—away?

What charm in words a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far—far—away?

Alfred Lord Tennyson

From THE PRINCESS

BUGLE SONG

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP V

NATURE

SUB-GROUP A

LANDSCAPES

From TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

They came to where the brushwood ceased, and day
Peer'd 'twixt the stems; and the ground broke away,
In a sloped sward down to a brawling brook;
And up as high as where they stood to look
On the brook's farther side was clear, but then
The underwood and trees began again.
This open glen was studded thick with thorns
Then white with blossoms; and you saw the horns,
Through last year's fern, of the shy fallow-deer
Who come at noon down to the water here.
You saw the bright-eyed squirrels dart along
Under the thorns on the greensward; and strong
The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,
And the weird chipping of the woodpecker
Rang lonelily and sharp; the sky was fair,
And a fresh breath of spring stirr'd everywhere.

Matthew Arnold

"A LITTLE WHILE, A LITTLE WHILE"

There is a spot mid barren hills
Where winter howls and driving rain;
But, if the dreary tempest chills
There is a light that warms again.

The house is old, the trees are bare,
Moonless above bends twilight's dome;
But what on earth is half so dear,
So longed for, as the hearth of home?

The mute bird sitting on the stone,
The dark moss dripping from the wall,
The thorn tree gaunt, the walks o'ergrown,
I love them how I love them all!

A little, and a long, green lane,
That opened on a common wide;
A distant, dreary, dim blue chain
Of mountains circling every side.

A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air;
And—deepening still the dream-like charm,
Wild moor sheep feeding everywhere.

Emily Brontë

MAN AND NATURE

A sad man on a summer day
Did look upon the earth and say—

"Purple cloud the hill-top binding;
Folded hills the valleys wind in;
Valleys with fresh streams among you;
Streams with bosky trees along you;
Trees with many birds and blossoms;

Birds with music-trembling bosoms;
Blossoms dropping dews that wreathe you
To your fellow flowers beneath you;
Flowers that constellate on earth;
Earth that shakest to the mirth
Of the merry Titan Ocean,
All his shining hair in motion!
Why am I thus the only one
Who can be dark beneath the sun?"

But when the summer day was past,
He looked to heaven and smiled at last,
Self-answered so—
"Because, O cloud
Pressing with thy crumpled shroud
Heavily on mountain top,—
Hills that almost seem to drop
Stricken with a misty death
To the valleys underneath,—
Valleys sighing with the torrent,—
Waters streaked with branches horrent,—
Branchless trees that shake your head
Wildly o'er your blossoms spread
Where the common flowers are found,—
Flowers with foreheads to the ground,—
Ground that shriekest while the sea
With his iron smiteth thee—
I am, besides, the only one
Who can be bright without the sun."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

II

Ours is a great wild country:
If you climb to our castle's top,
I don't see where your eye can stop;
For when you've passed the cornfield country,
Where vineyards leave off, flocks are packed,
And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,
And cattle-tract to open-chase,
And open-chase to the very base
Of the mountain where, at a funeral pace,
Round about, solemn and slow,
One by one, row after row,
Up and up the pine-trees go,
So, like black priests up, and so
Down the other side again
To another greater, wilder country,
That's one vast red drear burnt-up plain,
Branched through and through with many a vein
Whence iron's dug, and copper's dealt;
Look right, look left, look straight before,—
Beneath they mine, above they smelt,
Copper-ore and iron-ore,
And forge and furnace mould and melt,
And so on, more and ever more,
Till at the last, for a bounding belt,
Comes the salt sand hoar of the great sea-shore.
—And the whole is our Duke's country.

Robert Browning

From OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

The morn when first it thunders in March,
  The eel in the pond gives a leap, they say:
As I leaned and looked over the aloed arch
  Of the villa-gate this warm March day,
No flash snapped, no dumb thunder rolled
  In the valley beneath where, white and wide
And washed by the morning water-gold,
  Florence lay out on the mountain-side.

River and bridge and street and square
  Lay mine, as much at my beck and call,
Through the live translucent bath of air,
  As the sights in a magic crystal ball.
And of all I saw and of all I praised,
  The most to praise and the best to see,
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto raised:
  But why did it more than startle me?

Robert Browning

From LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
    Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
    Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
    As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
    (So they say)

Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one,)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

Robert Browning

THE SHADY LANE

Whence comest thou, shady lane? and why and how?
Thou, where with idle heart, ten years ago,
I wandered, and with childhood's paces slow
So long unthought of, and remembered now!
Again in vision clear thy pathwayed side
I tread, and view thy orchard plots again
With yellow fruitage hung,—and glimmering grain
Standing or shocked through the thick hedge espied.
This hot still noon of August brings the sight;
This quelling silence as of eve or night,
Wherein Earth (feeling as a mother may
After her travail's latest bitterest throes)
Looks up, so seemeth it, one half repose,
One half in effort, straining, suffering still.

Arthur Hugh Clough

From THE DRAMA OF THE DOCTOR'S WINDOW

Below, the Doctor's garden lay,
If thus imagination
May dignify a square of clay
Unused to vegetation,
Filled with a dismal-looking swing—
That brought to mind a gallows —
An empty kennel, mouldering,
And two dyspeptic aloes.

No sparrow chirped, no daisy sprung,
About the place deserted;
Only across the swing-board hung
A battered doll, inverted,
Which sadly seemed to disconcert
The vagrant cat that scanned it,
Sniffed doubtfully around the skirt,
But failed to understand it.

Austin Dobson

BALLADE OF MIDSUMMER DAYS AND NIGHTS

With a ripple of leaves and a tinkle of streams
The full world rolls in a rhythm of praise,
And the winds are one with the clouds and beams—
Midsummer days! midsummer days!
The dusk grows vast; in a purple haze,
While the west from a rapture of sunset rights,
Faint stars their exquisite lamps upraise—
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

The wood's green heart is a nest of dreams,
  The lush grass thickens and springs and sways,
The rathe wheat rustles, the landscape gleams—
  Midsummer days! midsummer days!
In the stilly fields, in the stilly ways,
All secret shadows and mystic lights,
  Late lovers murmur and linger and gaze—
  Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

There's a music of bells from the trampling teams,
  Wild skylarks hover, the gorses blaze,
The rich ripe rose as with incense steams—
  Midsummer days! midsummer days!
A soul from the honeysuckle strays,
And the nightingale as from prophet heights
  Sings to the earth of her million Mays—
  Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

Envoy

And it's oh! for my dear, and the charm that stays—
  Midsummer days! midsummer days!
It's oh! for my love, and the dark that plights—
  Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

William E. Henley

LONGINGS

(*From the Saint's Tragedy*)

Oh, that we two were Maying
  Down the stream of the soft spring breeze;

Like children with violets playing
In the shade of the whispering trees.

Oh! that we two sat dreaming
On the sward of some sheep-trimmed down,
Watching the white mist steaming
O'er river and mead and town.

Oh! that we two lay sleeping
In our nest in the church-yard sod;
With our limbs at rest on the quiet earth's breast,
And our souls at home with God.

Charles Kingsley

From ICELAND FIRST SEEN

Lo from our loitering ship a new land at last to be seen;
Toothed rocks down the side of the firth, on the east guard a weary wide lead,
And black slope the hillsides above, striped adown with their desolate green:
And a peak rises up on the west from the meeting of the cloud and sea,
Foursquare from base unto point like the building of gods that have been,—
The last of that waste of the mountains all cloud-wreathed and snow-flecked and gray,
And bright with the dawn that began just now at the ending of day.

* * * * * *

O land, as some cave by the sea where the treasures of old have been laid,
The sword it may be of a king whose name was the turning of fight;
Or the staff of some wise of the world that many things made and unmade;
Or the ring of a woman, maybe, whose woe is grown wealth and delight:
No wheat and no wine grows about it, no orchard for blossom and shade;
The few ships that sail by its blackness but deem it the mouth of a grave;
Yet sure when the world shall awaken, this too shall be mighty to save.

William Morris

From "TAMERTON CHURCH-TOWER; *or*, FIRST LOVE"

5

In love with home, I rose and eyed
The rainy North; but there
The distant hill-top, in its pride,
Adorn'd the brilliant air:
And, as I pass'd from Tavistock,
The scatter'd dwellings white,
The Church, the golden weather-cock,
Were whelm'd in happy light;
The children 'gan the sun to greet,
With song and senseless shout;

The lambs to skip, their dams to bleat;
In Tavy leapt the trout;
Across a fleeting eastern cloud,
The splendid rainbow sprang,
And larks, invisible and loud,
Within its zenith sang.

6

So lay the Earth that saw the skies
Grow clear and bright above,
As the repentant spirit lies
In God's forgiving love.
The lark forsook the waning day,
And all loud songs did cease;
The Robin, from a wither'd spray,
Sang like a soul at peace.
Far to the South, in sunset glow'd
The peaks of Dartmoor ridge,
And Tamar, full and tranquil, flow'd
Beneath the Gresson Bridge.
There, conscious of the numerous noise
Of rain-awaken'd rills,
And gathering deep and sober joys
From the heart-enlarging hills,
I sat, until the first white star
Appear'd, with dewy rays,
And the fair moon began to bar
With shadows all the ways.
O, well is thee, whate'er thou art,
And happy shalt thou be,

If thou hast known, within thy heart,
The peace that came to me.
O, well is thee, if aught shall win
Thy spirit to confess,
God proffers all, 'twere grievous sin
To live content in less!

Coventry Patmore

A GREEN CORNFIELD

The earth was green, the sky was blue;
I saw and heard one sunny morn
A skylark hang between the two,
A singing speck above the corn;

A stage below, in gay accord,
White butterflies danced on the wing,
And still the singing skylark soared,
And silent sank and soared to sing.

The cornfield stretched a tender green
To right and left beside my walks;
I knew he had a nest unseen
Somewhere among the million stalks.

And as I paused to hear his song
While swift the sunny moments slid,
Perhaps his mate sat listening long,
And listened longer than I did.

Christina G. Rossetti

SUNSET WINGS

To-night this sunset spreads two golden wings
  Cleaving the western sky;
Winged too with wind it is, and winnowings
Of birds; as if the day's last hour in rings
  Of strenuous flight must die.

Sun-steeped in fire, the homeward pinions sway
  Above the dovecote-tops;
And clouds of starlings, ere they rest with day,
Sink, clamorous like mill-waters, at wild play,
  By turns in every copse:

Each tree heart-deep the wrangling rout receives,—
  Save for the whirr within,
You could not tell the starlings from the leaves;
Then one great puff of wings, and the swarm heaves
  Away with all its din.

Even thus Hope's hours, in ever-eddying flight,
  To many a refuge tend;
With the first light she laughed, and the last light
Glows round her still; who natheless in the night
  At length must make an end.

And now the mustering rooks innumerable
  Together sail and soar,
While for the day's death, like a tolling knell,
Unto the heart they seem to cry, Farewell,
  No more, farewell, no more!

Is Hope not plumed, as 'twere a fiery dart?
And oh! thou dying day,
Even as thou goest must she too depart,
And Sorrow fold such pinions on the heart
As will not fly away?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

IN THE HIGHLANDS XVI

In the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes;
Where essential silence cheers and blesses
And for ever in the hill-recesses
Her more lovely music
Broods and dies.

O to mount again where erst I haunted;
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted,
And the low green meadows
Bright with sward;
And when even dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come, and planets glinted,
Lo, the valley hollow
Lamp-bestarred!

O to dream, O to awake and wander
There, and with delight to take and render,
Through the trance of silence,
Quiet breath!

Lo! for there, among the flowers and grasses,
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes;
Only winds and rivers,
Life and Death.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A LANDSCAPE BY COURBET

Low lies the mere beneath the moorside, still
And glad of silence: down the wood sweeps clear
To the soft verge where fed with many a rill
Low lies the mere.

The wind speaks only summer: eye nor ear
Sees aught at all of dark, hears aught of shrill,
From sound or shadow felt or fancied here.
Strange, as we praise the dead man's might and skill,
Strange that harsh thoughts should make such heavy cheer,
While, clothed with peace by heaven's most gentle will,
Low lies the mere.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

From THE LOTOS-EATERS

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!

* * * * * *

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP B

SEASCAPES

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits;—on the French coast, the light
Gleams, and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegaean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.
The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Matthew Arnold.

From THE WANDERER FROM THE FOLD

Oh, fairly spread thy early sail,
And fresh, and pure, and free
Was the first impulse of the gale
Which urged life's wave for thee!

Why did the pilot, too confiding,
Dream o'er that ocean's foam,
And trust in Pleasure's careless guiding
To bring his vessel home?

For well he knew what dangers frowned,
What mists would gather, dim;
What rocks, and shelves, and sands lay round
Between his port and him.

The very brightness of the sun,
  The splendour of the main,
The wind which bore him wildly on
  Should not have warned in vain.

An anxious gazer from the shore—
  I marked the whitening wave,
And wept above thy fate the more
  Because I could not save.

Emily Brontë

From A SEA-SIDE MEDITATION

"Ut per aquas quae nunc rerum simulacra videmus."

LUCRETIUS, LIB. I

Go, travel 'mid the hills! The summer's hand
Hath shaken, pleasant freshness o'er them all.
Go, travel 'mid the hills! There, tuneful streams
Are touching myriad stops, invisible;
And winds, and leaves, and birds, and your own thoughts,
(Not the least glad) in the wordless chorus, crowd
Around the thymele of Nature.

Go,
And travel onward. Soon shall leaf and bird,
Wind, stream, no longer sound. Thou shalt behold
Only the pathless sky, and houseless sward;
O'er which anon are spied innumerous sails
Of fisher vessels like the wings o' the hill,
And white as gulls above them, and as fast,—
But sink they—sink they out of sight. And now

The wind is springing upward in your face;
And, with its fresh-toned gushings, you may hear
Continuous sound which is not of the wind,
Nor of the thunder, nor o' the cataract's
Deep passion, nor o' the earthquake's wilder pulse;
But which rolls on in stern tranquillity,
As memories of evil o'er the soul;—
Boweth the bare broad heav'n.—What view you?
sea—and sea!
The sea—the glorious sea! from side to side,
Swinging the grandeur of his foamy strength,
And undersweeping the horizon,—on—
On—with his life and voice inscrutable.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

MEETING AT NIGHT

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

Robert Browning

PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

Robert Browning

WHERE LIES THE LAND

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know,
And where the land she travels from?
Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth face,
Link'd arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace!
Or o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.
On stormy nights, when wild northwesters rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.
Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from?
Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

Arthur Hugh Clough

O NAVIS

(*Ballade*)

Ship, to the roadstead rolled,
What dost thou?—O, once more
Regain in the port. Behold!
Thy sides are bare of oar,
Thy tall mast wounded sore
Of Africus, and see,
What shall thy spars restore!—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

What cable now will hold
When all drag out from shore!
What god canst thou, too bold,
In time of need implore!
Look! for thy sails flap o'er,
Thy stiff shrouds part and flee,
Fast—fast thy seams outpour,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

What though thy ribs of old
The pines of Pontus bore!
Not now to stern of gold
Men trust, or painted prore!
Thou, or thou count'st it store
A toy of winds to be,
Shun thou the Cyclads' roar,
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

ENVOY

Ship of the State, before
A care, and now to me
A hope in my heart's core,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

Austin Dobson

From BRIC-A-BRAC

Beside the idle summer sea
And in the vacant summer days,
Light Love came fluting down the ways,
Where you were loitering with me.

Who has not welcomed, even as we,
The jocund minstrel and his lays
Beside the idle summer sea
And in the vacant summer days?

We listened, we were fancy-free;
And lo! in terror and amaze
We stood alone—alone at gaze
With an implacable memory
Beside the idle summer sea.

William E. Henley

HAWTHORN AND LAVENDER

V

The good South-West on sea-worn wings
Comes shepherding the good rain;
The brave Sea breaks, and glooms, and swings,
A weltering, glittering plain.

Sound, Sea of England, sound and shine,
Blow, English Wind, amain,
Till in this old, gray heart of mine
The Spring need wake again!

William E. Henley

THE SANDS OF DEE

O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands of Dee:
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see:
The rolling mist came down and hid the land,
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair,
Above the nets at sea?"
Was ne'er a salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,

The cruel hungry foam
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
Across the sands of Dee!

Charles Kingsley

From LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON

"Now, therefore, O thou bitter sea,
With no long words we pray to thee,
But ask thee, hast thou felt before
Such strokes of the long ashen oar?
And hast thou yet seen such a prow
Thy rich and niggard waters plough?
"Nor yet, O sea, shalt thou be cursed,
If at thy hands we gain the worst,
And, wrapt in water, roll about
Blind-eyed, unheeding song or shout,
Within thine eddies far from shore,
Warmed by no sunlight any more.
"Therefore, indeed, we joy in thee,
And praise thy greatness, and will we
Take at thy hands both good and ill,
Yea, what thou wilt, and praise thee still,
Enduring not to sit at home,
And wait until the last days come,
When we no more may care to hold
White bosoms under crowns of gold,
And our dulled hearts no longer are
Stirred by the clangorous noise of war,
And hope within our souls is dead,

And no joy is remembered.
"So, if thou hast a mind to slay,
Fair prize thou hast of us to-day;
And if thou hast a mind to save,
Great praise and honour shalt thou have;
But whatso thou wilt do with us,
Our end shall not be piteous,
Because our memories shall live
When folk forget the way to drive
The black keel through the heaped-up sea,
And half dried up thy waters be."

William Morris

THE BARREN SHORE

Full many sing to me and thee
Their riches gather'd by the sea;
But I will sing, for I'm footsore,
The burthen of the barren shore.

The hue of love how lively shown
In this sole found cerulean stone
By twenty leagues of ocean roar,
O, burthen of the barren shore!

And these few crystal fragments bright,
As clear as truth, as strong as right,
I found in footing twenty more,
O, burthen of the barren shore!

And how far did I go for this
Small, precious piece of ambergris?
  Of weary leagues I went threescore,
  O, burthen of the barren shore!

The sand is poor, the sea is rich,
And I, I am I know not which?
  And well it were to know no more
  The burthen of the barren shore!

Coventry Patmore

WIND

The wind has such a rainy sound
  Moaning through the town,
The sea has such a windy sound,—
  Will the ships go down?

The apples in the orchard
  Tumble from their tree,—
Oh will the ships go down, go down,
  In the windy sea?

Christina G. Rossetti

CONFLUENTS

As rivers seek the sea,
  Much more deep than they,
So my soul seeks thee
  Far away;

As running rivers moan
On their course alone,
  So I moan
  Left alone.

As the delicate rose
  To the sun's sweet strength
Doth herself unclose,
  Breadth and length;
So spreads my heart to thee
Unveiled utterly,
  I to thee
  Utterly.

As morning dew exhales
  Sunwards pure and free
So my spirit fails
  After thee.
As dew leaves not a trace
On the green earth's face;
  I, no trace
  On thy face.

Its goal the river knows,
  Dewdrops find a way,
Sunlight cheers the rose
  In her day:
Shall I, lone sorrow past,
Find thee at the last,
  Sorrow past,
  Thee at last?

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

THE SEA LIMITS

Consider the sea's listless chime:
  Time's self it is, made audible,—
  The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
  Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
  No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath
  The mournfulness of ancient life,
  Enduring always at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
  Its painful pulse is in the sands.
  Lost utterly, the whole sky stands,
Grey and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
  Listen alone among the woods;
  Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee:
  Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
  Surge and sink back and surge again,—
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strewn beach
  And listen at its lips: they sigh
  The same desire and mystery,

The echo of the whole sea's speech.
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not anything but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

A VISIT FROM THE SEA

Far from the loud sea beaches
Where he goes fishing and crying,
Here in the inland garden
Why is the sea-gull flying?

Here are no fish to dive for
Here is the corn and lea;
Here are the green trees rustling.
Hie away home to sea!

Fresh is the river water
And quiet among the rushes;
This is no home for the sea-gull
But for the rooks and thrushes.

Pity the bird that has wandered!
Pity the sailor ashore!
Hurry him home to the ocean,
Let him come here no more!

High on the sea-cliff ledges
The white gulls are trooping and crying,

Here among rooks and roses,
Why is the sea-gull flying?

Robert Louis Stevenson

LOVE AT SEA

We are in love's land to-day;
Where shall we go?
Love, shall we start or stay,
Or sail or row?
There's many a wind and way,
And never a May but May;
We are in love's hand to-day;
Where shall we go?

Our landwind is the breath
Of sorrows kissed to death
And joys that were;
Our ballast is a rose;
Our way lies where God knows
And love knows where.
We are in love's hand to-day.—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
Our masts are bills of doves,
Our decks fine gold;
Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
Our stores are love-shafts fair
And manifold.
We are in love's hand to-day.—

Where shall we land you, sweet?
On fields of strange men's feet,
  Or fields near home?
Or where the fire-flowers blow,
Or where the the flowers of snow
  Or flowers of foam?
    We are in love's hand to-day.

Land me, she says, where love
Shows but one shaft, one dove,
  One heart, one hand,
  —A shore like that, my dear,
Lies where no man will steer,
  No maiden land.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

(Imitated from Théophile Gautier)

From Prelude to SONGS BEFORE SUNRISE

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will
  Across the waves of day and night
  To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill;
  And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
  Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,
  Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
  Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
Through age that drives on toward the red
  Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
To the equal waters of the dead;
  Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill!
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!

But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP C

SEASONS

From THYRSIS

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day —
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vest garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

Matthew Arnold

Loud without the wind was roaring
  Through th' autumnal sky;
Drenching wet, the cold rain pouring,
  Spoke of winter nigh.
    All too like that dreary eve,
  Did my exiled spirit grieve.
Grieved at first, but grieved not long,
  Sweet—how softly sweet!—it came,
Wild words of an ancient song,
  Undefined, without a name.

'It was spring, and the skylark was singing':
  Those words they awakened a spell;
They unlocked a deep fountain, whose springing
  Nor absence, nor distance can quell.

In the gloom of a cloudy November
  They uttered the music of May;
They kindled the perishing ember
  Into fervour that could not decay.

Awaken, o'er all my dear moorland,
  West-wind in thy glory and pride!
Oh! call me from valley and lowland,
  To walk by the hill-torrent's side!

Emily Brontë

THE AUTUMN

Go, sit upon the lofty hill,
And turn your eyes around,
Where waving woods and waters wild
Do hymn an autumn sound.
The summer sun is faint on them—
The summer flowers depart—
Sit still—as all transform'd to stone,
Except your musing heart.

How there you sat in summer-time,
May yet be in your mind;
And how you heard the green woods sing
Beneath the freshening wind.
Though the same wind now blows around,
You would its blast recall;
For every breath that stirs the trees,
Doth cause a leaf to fall.

Oh! like that wind, is all the mirth
That flesh and dust impart:
We cannot bear its visitings,
When change is on the heart.
Gay words and jests may make us smile,
When Sorrow is asleep;
But other things must make us smile,
When Sorrow bids us weep!

The dearest hands that clasp our hands,—
Their presence may be o'er;

The dearest voice that meets our ear,
  That tone may come no more!
Youth fades; and then, the joys of youth,
  Which once refresh'd our mind,
Shall come—as, on those sighing woods,
  The chilling autumn wind.

Hear not the wind—view not the woods;
  Look out o'er vale and hill:
In spring, the sky encircled them—
  The sky is round them still.
Come autumn's scathe—come winter's cold—
  Come change—and human fate!
Whatever prospect Heaven doth bound,
  Can ne'er be desolate.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From PIPPA PASSES

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

Robert Browning

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Robert Browning

From PARACELSUS

Then all is still; earth is a wintry clod;
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress, passes
Over its breast to waken it, rare verdure
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between

The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,
Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face;
The grass grows bright, the boughs are swoln with blooms
Like chrysalids impatient for the air,
The shining dorrs are busy, beetles run
Along the furrows, ants make their ado;
Above, birds fly in merry flocks, the lark
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;
Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing-gulls
Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe
Of nested limpets; savage creatures seek
Their loves in wood and plain—and God renews
His ancient rapture.

Robert Browning

From SORDELLO

Book—1

That autumn eve was stilled:
A last remains of sunset dimly burned
O'er the far forests, like a torch-flame turned
By the wind back upon its bearer's hand
In one long flare of crimson; as a brand,
The woods beneath lay black.

Robert Browning

IN A LONDON SQUARE

Put forth thy leaf, thou lofty plane,
East wind and frost are safely gone;
With zephyr mild and balmy rain
The summer comes serenely on;

Earth, air, and sun and skies combine
To promise all that's kind and fair:—
But thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, contain thyself and bear.
December days were brief and chill,
The winds of March were wild and drear,
And, nearing and receding still,
Spring never would, we thought, be here.
The leaves that burst, the suns that shine,
Had, not the less, their certain date:—
And thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, refrain thyself, and wait.

Arthur Hugh Clough

A Song of Autumn

My wind is turned to bitter north,
That was so soft a south before;
My sky, that shone so sunny bright,
With foggy gloom is clouded o'er:
My gay green leaves are yellow-black,
Upon the dank autumnal floor;
For love, departed once, comes back
No more again, no more.

A roofless ruin lies my home,
For winds to blow and rains to pour;
One frosty night befell, and lo!
I find my summer days are o'er:
The heart bereaved, of why and how
Unknowing, knows that yet before

It had what e'en to Memory now
Returns no more, no more.

Arthur Hugh Clough

A SONG OF THE FOUR SEASONS

When Spring comes laughing
By vale and hill,
By wind-flower walking
And daffodil,—
Sing stars of morning,
Sing morning skies,
Sing blue of speedwell,—
And my Love's eyes.

When comes the Summer,
Full-leaved and strong,
And gay birds gossip
The orchard long,—
Sing hid, sweet honey
That no bee sips;
Sing, red, red roses,—
And my Love's lips.

When Autumn scatters
The leaves again,
And piled sheaves bury
The broad-wheeled wain,—
Sing flutes of harvest
Where men rejoice;

Sing rounds of reapers,—
And my Love's voice.

But when comes Winter
With hail and storm,
And red fire roaring
And ingle warm,—
Sing first sad going
Of friends that part;
Then sing glad meeting,—
And my Love's heart.

Austin Dobson

ECHOES

XXII

The West a glimmering lake of light,
A dream of pearly weather,
The first of stars is burning white—
The star we watch together.
Is April dead? The unresting year
Will shape us our September,
And April's work is done, my dear —
Do you not remember?

O gracious eve! O happy star,
Still-flashing, glowing, sinking!—
Who lives of lovers near or far
So glad as I in thinking?
The gallant world is warm and green,
For May fulfils November.

When lights and leaves and loves have been,
Sweet, will you remember?

O star benignant and serene,
I take the good to-morrow,
That fills from verge to verge my dream,
With all its joy and sorrow!
The old, sweet spell is unforgot
That turns to June December;
And, tho' the world remembered not,
Love, we would remember.

William E. Henley

EASTER WEEK

(*Written for Music to be sung at a Parish Industrial Exhibition*)

See the land, her Easter keeping,
Rises as her Maker rose.
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,
Burst at last from winter snows.
Earth with heaven above rejoices;
Fields and gardens hail the spring;
Shaughs and woodlands ring with voices,
While the wild birds build and sing.

You, to whom your Maker granted
Powers to those sweet birds unknown,
Use the craft by God implanted;
Use the reason not your own.

Here, while Heaven and earth rejoices,
Each his Easter tribute bring—
Work of fingers, chant of voices,
Like the birds who build and sing.

Charles Kingsley

From THE GLITTERING PLAIN

Fair is the world, now autumn's wearing,
And the sluggard sun lies long abed;
Sweet are the days, now winter's nearing,
And all winds feign that the wind is dead.

Dumb is the hedge where the crabs hang yellow,
Bright as the blossoms of the spring;
Dumb is the close where the pears grow mellow,
And none but the dauntless redbreast sing.

Fair was the spring, but amidst his greening
Gray were the days of the hidden sun;
Fair was the summer, but overweening,
So soon his o'er-sweet days were done.

Come then, love, for peace is upon us;
Far off is failing, and far is fear,
Here where the rest in the end hath won us
In the garnering tide of the happy year.

Come from the gray old house by the water,
Where, far from the lips of the hungry sea,
Green groweth the grass o'er the field of the slaughter,
And all is a tale for thee and me.

William Morris

THE YEAR

The Crocus, while the days are dark,
  Unfolds its saffron sheen;
At April's touch, the crudest bark
  Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of might;
  While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
  The mushroom bursts the sod.

The Winter falls; the frozen rut
  Is bound with silver bars;
The snow-drift heaps against the hut,
  And night is pierced with stars.

Coventry Patmore

NUNC AMET QUI NUNQUAM AMAVIT

'Twas when the spousal time of May
  Hangs all the hedge with bridal wreaths,
And air's so sweet, the bosom gay
  Gives thanks for every breath it breathes,
When like to like is gladly moved,
  And each thing joins in Spring's refrain,
'Let those love now, who never loved;
  Let those who have loved love again;'
That I, in whom the sweet time wrought,
  Lay stretch'd within a lonely glade,

Abandon'd to delicious thought
Beneath the softly twinkling shade,
The leaves, all stirring, mimick'd well
A neighbouring rush of rivers cold,
And, as the sun or shadow fell,
So these were green and those were gold;
In dim recesses hyacinths droop'd,
And breaths of primrose lit the air,
Which, wandering through the woodland, stoop'd
And gather'd perfumes here and there;
Upon the spray the squirrel swung,
And careless songsters, six or seven,
Sang lofty songs the leaves among,
Fit for their only listener, Heaven.

Coventry Patmore

SEASONS

In Springtime when the leaves are young,
Clear dewdrops gleam like jewels, hung
On boughs the fair birds roost among.

When Summer comes with sweet unrest,
Birds weary of their mother's breast,
And look abroad and leave the nest.

In Autumn ere the waters freeze,
The swallows fly across the seas:—
If we could fly away with these!

In Winter when the birds are gone,
The sun himself looks starved and wan,
And starved the snow he shines upon.

Christina G. Rossetti

SEASONS

Crocuses and snow drops wither,
Violets, primroses together,
Fading with the fading Spring
Before a fuller blossoming.

O sweet Summer, pass not soon,
Stay awhile the harvest-moon:
O sweetest Summer, do not go,
For Autumn's next and next the snow.

When Autumn comes the days are drear,
It is the downfall of the year:
We heed the wind and falling leaf
More than the golden harvest-sheaf.

Dreary Winter come at last:
Come quickly, so be quickly past:
Dusk and sluggish Winter, wane
Till Spring and sunlight dawn again.

Christina G. Rossetti

AUTUMN IDLENESS

This sunlight shames November where he grieves
In dead red leaves, and will not let him shun
The day, though bough with bough be over-run:

But with a blessing every glade receives
High salutation; while from hillock-eaves
  The deer gaze calling, dappled white and dun,
  As if, being foresters of old, the sun
Had marked them with the shade of forest-leaves.

Here dawn to-day unveiled her magic glass;
  Here noon now gives the thirst and takes the dew;
Till eve bring rest when other good things pass.
  And here the last hours the lost hours renew
While I still lead my shadow o'er the grass,
  Nor know, for longing, that which I should do.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

WINTER

In rigorous hours, when down the iron lane
  The redbreast looks in vain
  For hips and haws,
Lo, shining flowers upon my window-pane
  The silver pencil of the winter draws.

When all the snowy hill
And the bare woods are still;
When snipes are silent in the frozen bogs,
  And all the garden garth is whelmed in mire,
Lo, by the hearth, the laughter of the logs—
  More fair than roses, lo, the flowers of fire!

Robert Louis Stevenson

A YEAR'S CAROLS

JANUARY

Hail, January, that bearest here
On snowbright breasts the babe-faced year
  That weeps and trembles to be born.
Hail, maid and mother, strong and bright,
Hooded and cloaked and shod with white,
  Whose eyes are stars that match the morn
Thy forehead braves the storm's bent bow,
Thy feet enkindle stars of snow.

FEBRUARY

Wan February with weeping cheer,
Whose cold hand guides the youngling year
  Down misty roads of mire and rime,
Before thy pale and fitful face
The shrill wind shifts the clouds apace
  Through skies the morning scarce may climb.
Thine eyes are thick with heavy tears,
But lit with hopes that light the year's.

MARCH

Hail, happy March, whose foot on earth
Rings as the blast of martial mirth
  When trumpets fire men's hearts for fray.
No race of wild things winged or finned
May match the might that wings thy wind
  Through air and sea, through scud and spray

Strong joy and thou were powers twin-born
Of tempest and the towering morn.

APRIL

Crowned April, king whose kiss bade earth
Bring forth to time her lordliest birth
  When Shakespeare from thy lips drew breath
And laughed to hold in one soft hand
A spell that bade the world's wheel stand,
  And power on life, and power on death,
With quiring suns and sunbright showers
Praise him, the flower of all thy flowers.

MAY

Hail, May, whose bark puts forth full-sailed
For summer; May, whom Chaucer hailed
  With all his happy might of heart,
And gave thy rosebright daisy-tips
Strange fragrance from his amorous lips
  That still thine own breath seems to part
And sweeten till each word they say
Is even a flower of flowering May.

JUNE

Strong June, superb, serene, elate
With conscience of thy sovereign state
  Untouched of thunder, though the storm
Scathe here and there thy shuddering skies

And bid its lightning cross thine eyes
With fire, thy golden hours inform
Earth and the souls of men with life
That brings forth peace from shining strife.

JULY

Hail, proud July, whose fervent mouth
Bids even be morn, and north be south
By grace and gospel of thy word,
Whence all the splendour of the sea
Lies breathless with delight in thee
And marvel at the music heard
From the ardent silent lips of noon
And midnight's rapturous plenilune.

AUGUST

Great August, lord of golden lands,
Whose lordly joy through seas and strands
And all the red-ripe heart of earth
Strikes passion deep as life, and stills
The folded vales and folding hills
With gladness too divine for mirth,
The gracious glories of thine eyes
Make night a noon where darkness dies.

SEPTEMBER

Hail, kind September, friend whose grace
Renews the bland year's bounteous face
With largess given of corn and wine

Through many a land that laughs with love
Of thee and all the heaven above,
  More fruitful found than all save thine
Whose skies fulfil with strenuous cheer
The fervent fields that knew thee near.

OCTOBER

October of the tawny crown,
Whose heavy-laden hands drop down
  Blessing, the bounties of thy breath
And mildness of thy mellowing might
Fill earth and heaven with love and light
  Too sweet for fear to dream of death
Or memory, while thy joy lives yet,
To know what joy would fain forget.

NOVEMBER

Hail, soft November, though thy pale
Sad smile rebuke the words that hail
  Thy sorrow with no sorrowing words
Or gratulate thy grief with song
Less bitter than the winds that wrong
  Thy withering woodlands, where the birds
Keep hardly heart to sing or see
How fair thy faint wan face may be.

DECEMBER

December, thou whose hallowing hands
On shuddering seas and hardening lands
  Set as a sacramental sign

The seal of Christmas felt on earth
As witness toward a new year's birth
  Whose promise makes thy death divine,
The crowning joy that comes of thee
Makes glad all grief on land or sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

MARZO PAZZO

Mad March, with the wind in his wings wide-spread,
Leaps from heaven, and the deep dawn's arch
Hails re-risen again from the dead
  Mad March.

Soft small flames on rowan and larch
Break forth as laughter on lips that said
Naught till the pulse in them beat love's march.

But the heartbeat now in the lips rose-red
Speaks life to the world, and the winds that parch
Bring April forth as a bride to wed Mad March.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

SPRING

From IN MEMORIAM

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
  O sweet new-year, delaying long;
  Thou doest expectant Nature wrong,
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea.

From LOCKSLEY HALL

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's
breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another
crest;
In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd
dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP D

PLANTS

From "LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS"

In this lone, open glade I lie,
Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

Matthew Arnold

THE BLUEBELL

The bluebell is the sweetest flower
That waves in summer air;
Its blossoms have the mightiest power
To soothe my spirit's care.

There is a spell in purple heath
Too wildly, sadly dear;
The violet has a fragrant breath,
But fragrance will not cheer.

The trees are bare, the sun is cold,
And seldom, seldom seen;
The heavens have lost their zone of gold,
And earth her robe of green.

And ice upon the glancing stream
Has cast its sombre shade;
And distant hills and valleys seem
In frozen mist arrayed.

The bluebell cannot charm me now,
The heath has lost its bloom;
The violets in the glen below,
They yield no sweet perfume.

But, though I mourn the sweet bluebell,
'Tis better far away;
I know how fast my tears would swell
To see it smile to-day.

For, oh! when chill the sunbeams fall
  Adown that dreary sky,
And gild yon dank and darkened wall
  With transient brilliancy;

How do I weep, how do I pine
  For the time of flowers to come,
And turn me from that fading shine,
  To mourn the fields of home!

Emily Brontë

A Dead Rose

O Rose! who dares to name thee?
No longer roseate now, nor soft nor sweet;
But pale, and hard, and dry, as stubble-wheat,—
  Kept seven years in a drawer—thy titles shame thee.

The breeze that used to blow thee
Between the hedge-row thorns, and take away
An odour up the lane to last all day,—
  If breathing now,—unsweeten'd would forgo thee.

The sun that used to smite thee,
And mix his glory in thy gorgeous urn,
Till beam appear'd to bloom, and flower to burn,—
  If shining now,—with not a hue would light thee.

The dew that used to wet thee,
And, white first, grow incarnadined, because

It lay upon thee where the crimson was,—
If dropping now,—would darken where it met thee.

The fly that lit upon thee,
To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet,
Along thy leaf's pure edges, after heat,—
If lighting now,—would coldly overrun thee.

The bee that once did suck thee,
And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,
And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,—
If passing now,—would blindly overlook thee.

The heart doth recognize thee,
Alone, alone! The heart doth smell thee sweet,
Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete—
Perceiving all those changes that disguise thee.

Yes, and the heart doth owe thee
More love, dead rose, than to any roses bold
Which Julia wears at dances, smiling cold:—
Lie still upon this heart which breaks below thee!

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

LESSONS FROM THE GORSE

Mountain gorses, ever-golden,
Cankered not the whole year long!
Do ye teach us to be strong,
Howsoever pricked and holden,
Like your thorny blooms, and so

Trodden on by rain and snow,
Up the hill-side of this life, as
bleak as where ye grow?

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms,
Do ye teach us to be glad
When no summer can be had,
Blooming in our inward bosoms?
Ye whom God preserveth still,
Set as lights upon a hill,
Tokens to the wintry earth that
beauty liveth still!

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us
From that academic chair
Canopied with azure air,
That the wisest word man reaches
Is the humblest he can speak?
Ye, who live on mountain peak,
Yet live low along the ground,
beside the grasses meek!

Mountain gorses, since Linnaeus
Knelt beside you on the sod,
For your beauty thanking God,—
For your teaching, Ye should see us
Bowing in prostration new!
Whence arisen,—if one or two
Drops be on our cheeks—O world,
they are not tears but dew.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

THE FLOWER'S NAME

Here's the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short while since:
Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss
Hinders the hinges and makes them wince!
She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,
As back with that murmur the wicket swung;
For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,
To feed and forget it the leaves among.

Down this side of the gravel-walk
She went while her robe's edge brushed the box:
And here she paused in her gracious talk
To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.
Roses, ranged in valiant row,
I will never think that she passed you by!
She loves you, noble roses, I know;
But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie!

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim;
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
Its soft meandering Spanish name:
What a name! Was it love or praise?
Speech half-asleep or song half-awake?
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,
Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

Roses, if I live and do well,
I may bring her, one of these days,
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase;

But do not detain me now; for she lingers
There, like sunshine over the ground,
And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,
Stay as you are and be loved forever!
Bud, if I kiss you 't is that you blow not,
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never!
For while it pouts, her fingers wrestle,
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,
Till round they turn and down they nestle—
Is not the dear mark still to be seen?

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;
Whither I follow her, beauties flee;
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
June's twice June since she breathed it with me?
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
Treasure my lady's lightest footfall!
—Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—
Roses, you are not so fair after all!

Robert Browning

From PARLEYINGS WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE IN THEIR DAY

With Gerard De Lairesse

XVI

Dance, yellows and whites and reds,—
Lead your gay orgy, leaves, stalks, heads
Astir with the wind in the tulip-beds!

There's sunshine; scarcely a wind at all
Disturbs starved grass and daisies small
On a certain mound by a churchyard wall.

Daisies and grass be my heart's bedfellows
On the mound wind spares and sunshine mellows:
Dance you, reds and whites and yellows!

Robert Browning

A LONDON IDYLL

On grass, on gravel, in the sun,
  Or now beneath the shade,
They went, in pleasant Kensington,
  A prentice and a maid.
That Sunday morning's April glow,
  How should it not impart
A stir about the veins that flow
  To feed the youthful heart.

Ah! years may come and years may bring
  The truth that is not bliss,
But will they bring another thing
  That can compare with this?

I read it in that arm she lays
  So oft on his; her mien,
Her step, her very gown betrays
  (What in her eyes were seen)

That not in vain the young buds round,
The cawing birds above,
The air, the incense of the ground,
Are whispering, breathing love.

Ah! years may come and years may bring
The truth that is not bliss,
But will they bring another thing
That can compare with this?

To inclination, young and blind,
So perfect, as they lent,
By purest innocence confined
Unconscious free consent.
Persuasive power of vernal change,
On this, thine earliest day,
Canst thou have found in all thy range
One fitter type than they?

Ah! years may come and years may bring
The truth that is not bliss,
But will they bring another thing
That can compare with this?

The high-titled cares of adult strife,
Which we our duties call,
Trades, arts, and politics of life,
Say, have they, after all,
One other object, end or use
Than that, for girl and boy,

The punctual earth may still produce
  This golden flower of joy.

Ah! years may come and years may bring
  The truth that is not bliss,
But will they bring another thing
  That can compare with this?

O odours of new-budding rose,
  O lily's chaste perfume,
O fragrance that didst first unclose
  The young Creation's bloom!
Ye hang around me, while in sun
  Anon and now in shade,
I watched in pleasant Kensington
  The prentice and the maid.

Ah! years may come and years may bring
  The truth that is not bliss,
But will they bring another thing
  That can compare with this?

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

Poor Rose! I lift you from the street—
  Far better I should own you,
Than you should lie for random feet,
  Where careless hands have thrown you!

Poor pinky petals, crushed and torn!
Did heartless Mayfair use you,
Then cast you forth to lie forlorn,
For chariot wheels to bruise you?

I saw you last in Edith's hair.
Rose, you would scarce discover
That I she passed upon the stair
Was Edith's favoured lover,

A month—"a little month"—ago—
O theme for moral writer!
'Twixt you and me, my Rose, you know,
She might have been politer;

But let that pass. She gave you then—
Behind the oleander—
To one, perhaps, of all the men,
Who best could understand her,—

Cyril that, duly flattered, took,
As only Cyril's able,
With just the same Arcadian look
He used, last night, for Mabel;

Then, having waltzed till every star
Had paled away in morning,
Lit up his cynical cigar,
And tossed you downward, scorning.

Kismet, my Rose; Revenge is sweet,—
She made my heart-strings quiver;

And yet—You shan't lie in the street,
I'll drop you in the River.

Austin Dobson

From HAWTHORN AND LAVENDER

XVIII

Poplar and lime and chestnut
Meet in a living screen;
And there the winds and the sunbeams keep
A revel of gold and green.

O, the green dreams and the golden,
The golden thoughts and green,
This green and golden end of May
My lover and me between!

William E. Henley

From HAWTHORN AND LAVENDER

XXV

This is the moon of roses,
The lovely and flowerful time;
And, as white roses climb the wall,
Your dreams about me climb.

This is the moon of roses,
Glad and golden and blue;
And, as red roses drink of the sun,
My dreams they drink of you.

This is the moon of roses!
  The cherishing South-West blows,
And life, dear heart, for me and you,
  O, life's rejoicing rose.

William E. Henley

THE POETRY OF A ROOT CROP

Underneath their eider-robe
Russet swede and golden globe,
Feathered carrot, burrowing deep,
Steadfast wait in charmèd sleep;
Treasure-houses wherein lie,
Locked by angels' alchemy,
Milk and hair, and blood, and bone,
Children of the barren stone;
Children of the flaming Air,
With his blue eye keen and bare,
Spirit-peopled smiling down
On frozen field and toiling town—
Toiling town that will not heed
God His voice for rage and greed;
Frozen fields that surpliced lie,
Gazing patient at the sky;
Like some marble carven nun,
With folded hands when work is done,
Who mute upon her tomb doth pray,
Till the resurrection day.

Charles Kingsley

SUMMER DAWN

Pray but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,
Think but one thought of me up in the stars.
The summer night waneth, the morning light slips,
Faint and grey 'twixt the leaves of the aspen,
betwixt the cloud-bars,
That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:
Patient and colourless, though Heaven's gold
Waits to float through them along with the sun.
Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,
The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;
Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn,
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.
Speak but one word to me over the corn,
Over the tender, bowed locks of the corn.

William Morris

From "ARBOR VITAE"

With honeysuckle, over-sweet, festoon'd;
With bitter ivy bound;
Terraced with funguses unsound;
Deform'd with many a boss
And closed scar, o'ercushion'd deep with moss;
Bunch'd all about with pagan mistletoe;
And thick with nests of the hoarse bird
That talks, but understands not his own word;
Stands, and so stood a thousand years ago,
A single tree.

Thunder has done its worst among its twigs,
Where the great crest yet blackens, never pruned,
But in its heart, alway
Ready to push new verdurous boughs, whene'er
The rotting saplings near it fall and leave it air,
Is all antiquity and no decay.

Coventry Patmore

SONG

Oh roses for the flush of youth,
And bay for those dead in their prime;
But pluck an ivy branch for me
Grown old before my time.

Oh violets for the grave of youth,
And bay for those dead in their prime;
Give me the withered leaves I chose
Before in the old time.

Christina G. Rossetti

A ROSE PLANT IN JERICHO

At morn I plucked a rose and gave it Thee,
A rose of joy and happy love and peace,
A rose with scarce a thorn:
But in the chillness of a second morn
My rose bush drooped, and all its gay increase
Was but one thorn that wounded me.

I plucked the thorn and offered it to Thee,
And for my thorn Thou gavest love and peace,
Not joy this mortal morn:
If Thou hast given much treasure for a thorn,
Wilt Thou not give me for my rose increase
Of gladness, and all sweets to me?

My thorny rose, my love and pain, to Thee
I offer; and I set my heart in peace,
And rest upon my thorn;
For verily I think to-morrow morn
Shall give me Paradise, my gift's increase,
Yea, give Thy very Self to me.

Christina G. Rossetti

EMBLEM FLOWERS

Roses blushing red and white,
For delight;
Honeysuckle wreaths above,
For love;
Dim sweet-scented heliotrope,
For hope;
Shining lilies tall and straight
For royal state;
Dusky pansies, let them be
For memory;
With violets of fragrant breath,
For death.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

Song VIII
The Woodspurge

The wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill:
I had walked on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was, —
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory:
One thing then learnt remains to me, —
The woodspurge has a cup of three!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Song IX
The Honeysuckle

I plucked a honeysuckle where
The hedge on high is quick with thorn,
And climbing for the prize, was torn,

And fouled my feet in quag-water;
  And by the thorns and by the wind
  The blossom that I took was thinn'd
And yet I found it sweet and fair.

Thence to a richer growth I came,
  Where, nursed in mellow intercourse,
  The honeysuckle spray by scores,
Not harried like my single stem,
  All virgin lamps of scent and dew.
  So from my hand that first I threw,
Yet plucked not any more of them.

Song X
A Young Fir-wood

These little firs to-day are things
  To clasp into a giant's cap,
  Or fans to suit his lady's lap.
From many winters many springs
  Shall cherish them in strength and sap,
  Till they be marked upon the map,
A wood for the wind's wanderings.

All seed is in the sower's hands:
  And what at first was trained to spread
  Its shelter for some single head,—
Yea, even such fellowship of wands,—
  May hide the sunset, and the shade
  Of its great multitude be laid
Upon the earth and elder sands.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

THE FLOWERS

All the names I know from nurse:
Gardener's garters, Shepherd's purse,
Bachelor's buttons, Lady's smock,
And the Lady Hollyhock.

Fairy places, fairy things,
Fairy woods where the wild bee wings,
Tiny trees for tiny dames—
These must all be fairy names!

Tiny woods below whose boughs
Shady fairies weave a house;
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,
Where the braver fairies climb!

Fair are grown-up people's trees,
But the fairest woods are these;
Where if I were not so tall,
I should live for good and all.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A MOSS-ROSE

If the rose of all flowers be the rarest
  That heaven may adore from above,
And the fervent moss-rose be the fairest
  That sweetens the summer with love,

Can it be that a fairer than any
  Should blossom afar from the tree?
Yet one, and a symbol of many,
  Shone sudden for eyes that could see.

In the grime and the gloom of November
  The bliss and the bloom of July
Bade autumn rejoice and remember
  The balm of the blossoms gone by.

Would you know what moss-rose now it may be
  That puts all the rest to the blush,
The flower was the face of a baby,
  The moss was a bonnet of plush.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE FLOWER

Once in a golden hour
  I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
  The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
  Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
  Curs'd me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
  It wore a crown of light,

But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
"Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies root and all,
I hold you here in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP E

ANIMALS

PHILOMELA

Hark! ah, the nightingale—
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark!—what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?
Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change

Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain! *Matthew Arnold*

SONG

The linnet in the rocky dells,
  The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather-bells
  That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;
  The wild birds raise their brood;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
  Have left her solitude!

I ween, that when the grave's dark wall
  Did first her form retain,
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall
  The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
  Unchecked through future years;
But where is all their anguish now,
  And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honour's breath,
  Or pleasure's shade pursue—
The dweller in the land of death
  Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep
  Till sorrow's source were dry,
She would not, in her tranquil sleep,
  Return a single sigh!

Blow, west wind, by the lonely mound,
  And murmur, summer streams—
There is no need of other sound
  To soothe my lady's dreams.

Emily Brontë

WISDOM UNAPPLIED

I

If I were thou, O butterfly,
And poised my purple wing to spy
The sweetest flowers that live and die,

II

I would not waste my strength on those,
As thou,—for summer has a close,
And pansies bloom not in the snows.

III

If I were thou, O working bee,
And all that honey-gold I see
Could delve from roses easily,

IV

I would not hive it at man's door,
As thou,—that heirdom of my store
Should make him rich and leave me poor.

V

If I were thou, O eagle proud,
And screamed the thunder back aloud,
And faced the lightning from the cloud,

VI

I would not build my eyrie-throne,
As thou,—upon a crumbling stone
Which the next storm may trample down.

VII

If I were thou, O gallant steed,
With pawing hoof and dancing head,
And eye outrunning thine own speed,

VIII

I would not meeken to the rein,
As thou,—nor smooth my nostril plain
From the glad desert's snort and strain.

IX

If I were thou, red-breasted bird,
With song, at shut-up window heard,
Like Love's sweet Yes too long deferred,

X

I would not overstay delight,
As thou,—but take a swallow-flight
Till the new spring returned to sight.

XI

While yet I spake, a touch was laid
Upon my brow, whose pride did fade
As thus, methought, an angel said,—

XII

"If I were thou who sing'st this song,
Most wise for others, and most strong
In seeing right while doing wrong,

XIII

"I would not waste my cares, and choose,
As thou,—to seek what thou must lose,
Such gains as perish in the use.

XIV

"I would not work where none can win,
As thou, halfway 'twixt grief and sin,
But look above and judge within.

XV

"I would not let my pulse beat high,
As thou,—towards fame's regality,
Nor yet in love's great jeopardy.

XVI

"I would not champ the hard cold bit,
As thou,—of what the world thinks fit.
But take God's freedom, using it.

XVII

"I would not play earth's winter out,
As thou,—but gird my soul about,
And live for life past death and doubt.

XVIII

"Then sing, O singer! but allow,
Beast, fly and bird, called foolish now,
Are wise (for all thy scorn) as thou."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

THE SEA-MEW

How joyously the young sea-mew
Lay dreaming on the waters blue,
Whereon our little bark had thrown
A little shade, the only one,—
But shadows ever man pursue.

Familiar with the waves and free
As if their own white foam were he,
His heart upon the heart of ocean
Lay learning all its mystic motion,
And throbbing to the throbbing sea.

And such a brightness in his eye,
As if the ocean and the sky
Within him had lit up and nursed
A soul God gave him not at first
To comprehend their majesty.

We were not cruel, yet did sunder
His white wing from the blue waves under,
And bound it, while his fearless eyes
Shone up to ours in calm surprise,
As deeming us some ocean wonder!

We bore our ocean bird unto
A grassy place, where he might view
The flowers that curtsey to the bees,
The waving of the tall green trees,
The falling of the silver dew.

But flowers of earth were pale to him
Who had seen the rainbow fishes swim;
And when earth's dew around him lay
He thought of ocean's winged spray,
And his eye waxed sad and dim.

The green trees round him only made
A prison with their darksome shade;
And dropped his wing, and mourned he
For his own boundless glittering sea—
Albeit he knew not they could fade.

Then One her gladsome face did bring,
Her gentle voice's murmuring,
In Ocean's stead his heart to move
And teach him what was human love:
He thought it a strange, mournful thing.

He lay down in his grief to die
(First looking to the sea-like sky
That hath no waves!) because, alas!
Our human touch did on him pass,
And, with our touch, our agony.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

WHITE WITCHCRAFT

If you and I could change to beasts, what beast should
either be?
Shall you and I play Jove for once? Turn fox then,
I decree!
Shy wild sweet stealer of the grapes! Now do your
worst on me!

And thus you think to spite your friend—turned
loathsome? What, a toad?
So, all men shrink and shun me! Dear men, pursue
your road!
Leave but my crevice in the stone, a reptile's fit abode!

Now say your worst, Canidia! "He's loathsome, I
allow:
There may or may not lurk a pearl beneath his
puckered brow:
But see his eyes that follow mine—love lasts there,
anyhow."

Robert Browning

From SAUL

V

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine
round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those
sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one
after one,

So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done,
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

VI

—Then the tune for which quails on the cornland will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

Robert Browning

A Nightingale in Kensington Gardens

They paused,—the cripple in the chair,
More bent with pain than age;
The mother with her lines of care;
The many-buttoned page;

The noisy, red-cheeked nursery-maid,
With straggling train of three;
The Frenchman with his frogs and braid;—
All, curious, paused to see.

If possible, the small, dusk bird
That from the almond bough,
Had poured the joyous chant they heard,
So suddenly, but now.

And one poor POET stopped and thought—
How many a lonely lay
That bird had sung ere fortune brought
It near the common way,

Where the crowd hears the note. And then,—
What birds must sing the song,
To whom that hour of listening men
Could ne'er in life belong!

But "Art for Art!" the Poet said,
"'Tis still the Nightingale,
That sings where no men's feet will tread,
And praise and audience fail."

Austin Dobson

ECHOES

To A. D.

XVIII

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The lark's is a clarion call,

And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
  But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
  And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
  Our hearts and lips together.

William E. Henley

From HAWTHORN AND LAVENDER

VII

The April sky sags low and drear,
  The April winds blow cold,
The April rains fall gray and sheer,
  And yearlings keep the fold.

But the rook has built, and the song-birds quire,
  And over the faded lea
The lark soars glorying, gyre on gyre,
  And he is the bird for me!

For he sings as if from his watchman's height
  He saw, this blighting day,
The far vales break into colour and light
  From the banners and arms of May.

William E. Henley

THE NIGHT BIRD

A Myth

A floating, a floating
Across the sleeping sea,

All night I heard a singing bird
Upon the topmost tree.

'Oh came you off the isles of Greece,
Or off the banks of Seine;
Or off some tree in forests free,
Which fringe the western main?'

'I came not off the old world
Nor yet from off the new—
But I am one of the birds of God
Which sing the whole night through.'

'Oh sing, and wake the dawning—
Oh whistle for the wind;
The night is long, the current strong,
My boat it lags behind!'

'The current sweeps the old world,
The current sweeps the new;
The wind will blow, the dawn will glow
Ere thou hast sailed them through.'

Charles Kingsley

A LAMENT

The merry, merry lark was up and singing,
And the hare was out and feeding on the lea,
And the merry, merry bells below were ringing,
When my child's laugh rang through me.
Now the hare is snared and dead beside the snow-yard

And the lark beside the dreary winter sea;
And my baby in his cradle in the church-yard
Waiteth there until the bells bring me.

Charles Kingsley

From THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON

Orpheus

O the sweet valley of deep grass,
Where through the summer stream doth pass,
In chain of shallow, and still pool,
From misty morn to evening cool;
Where the black ivy creeps and twines
O'er the dark-armed, red-trunked pines,
Whence clattering the pigeon flits,
Or, brooding o'er her thin eggs, sits,
And every hollow of the hills
With echoing song the mavis fills.
There by the stream, all unafraid,
Shall stand the happy shepherd maid,
Alone in first of sunlit hours;
Behind her, on the dewy flowers,
Her homespun woolen raiment lies,
And her white limbs and sweet grey eyes
Shine from the calm green pool and deep,
While round about the swallows sweep,
Not silent; and would God that we,
Like them, were landed from the sea.

William Morris

AN EVENING SCENE

The sheep-bell tolleth curfew-time;
  The gnats, a busy rout,
Fleck the warm air; the dismal owl
  Shouteth a sleepy shout;
The voiceless bat, more felt than seen,
  Is flitting round about.

The aspen leaflets scarcely stir;
  The river seems to think;
Athwart the dusk, broad primroses
  Look coldly from the brink,
Where, listening to the freshet's noise,
  The quiet cattle drink.

The bees boom past; the white moths rise
  Like spirits from the ground;
The gray flies hum their weary tune,
  A distant, dream-like sound;
And far, far off, to the slumb'rous eve,
  Bayeth an old guardhound.

Coventry Patmore

BIRDS OF PARADISE

Golden-winged, silver-winged,
  Winged with flashing flame,
Such a flight of birds I saw,
  Birds without a name:

Singing songs in their own tongue—
Song of songs—they came.

One to another calling,
Each answering each,
One to another calling
In their proper speech:
High above my head they wheeled,
Far out of reach.

On wings of flame they went and came
With a cadenced clang;
Their silver wings tinkled,
Their golden wings rang;
The wind it whistled through their wings
Where in heaven they sang.

They flashed and they darted
Awhile before mine eyes,
Mounting, mounting, mounting still,
In haste to scale the skies,
Birds without a nest on earth,
Birds of Paradise.

Where the moon riseth not
Nor sun seeks the west,
There to sing their glory
Which they sing at rest,
There to sing their love-song
When they sing their best:—

Not in any garden
That mortal foot hath trod,
Not in any flowering tree

That springs from earthly sod,
But in the garden where they dwell
The Paradise of God.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

Sonnet XV
Winged Hours

Each hour until we meet is as a bird
That wings from far his gradual way along
The rustling covert of my soul,—his song
Still loudlier trilled through leaves more deeply stirr'd:
But at the hour of meeting, a clear word
Is every note he sings, in Love's own tongue;
Yet, Love, thou know'st the sweet strain suffers wrong,
Through our contending kisses oft unheard.

What of that hour at last, when for her sake
No wing may fly to me nor song may flow;
When, wandering round my life unleaved, I know
The bloodied feathers scattered in the brake,
And think how she, far from me, with like eyes
Sees through the untuneful bough the wingless skies?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

GARDEN DAYS

XXXVI

My house, I say. But hark to the sunny doves
That make my roof the arena of their loves,
That gyre about the gable all day long

And fill the chimneys with their murmurous song:
Our house, they say; and *mine,* the cat declares
And spreads his golden fleece upon the chairs;
And *mine* the dog, and rises stiff with wrath
If any alien foot profane the path.
So, too, the buck that trimmed my terraces,
Our whilom gardener, called the garden his,
Who now, deposed, surveys my plain abode
And his late kingdom, only from the road.

Robert Louis Stevenson

ENVOI

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,
Frail pale wings for the winds to try,
Small white wings that we scarce can see,
Fly.
Here and there may a chance-caught eye
Note in a score of you twain or three
Brighter or darker of mould or dye.

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
Some fly soft as a low long sigh:
All to the haven where each would be,
Fly.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

TO A CAT

I

Stately, kindly, lordly friend,
Condescend

Here to sit by me, and turn
Glorious eyes that smile and burn,
Golden eyes, love's lustrous meed,
On the golden page I read.

All your wondrous wealth of hair,
Dark and fair,
Silken-shaggy, soft and bright
As the clouds and beams of night,
Pays my reverent hand's caress
Back with friendlier gentleness.

Dogs may fawn on all and some
As they come;
You, a friend of loftier mind,
Answer friends alone in kind.
Just your foot upon my hand
Softly bids it understand.

Morning round this silent sweet
Garden-seat
Sheds its wealth of gathering light,
Thrills the gradual clouds with might,
Changes woodland, orchard, heath,
Lawn, and garden there beneath.

Fair and dim they gleamed below:
Now they glow
Deep as even your sunbright eyes,
Fair as even the wakening skies.
Can it not or can it be
Now that you give thanks to see?

May not you rejoice as I,
Seeing the sky
Change to heaven revealed, and bid
Earth reveal the heaven it hid
All night long from stars and moon,
Now the sun sets all in tune?

What within you wakes with day
Who can say?
All too little may we tell,
Friends who like each other well,
What might haply, if we might,
Bid us read our lives aright.

II

Wild on woodland ways your sires
Flashed like fires;
Fair as flame and fierce and fleet
As with wings on wingless feet
Shone and sprang your mother, free,
Bright and brave as wind or sea.

Free and proud and glad as they,
Here to-day
Rests or roams their radiant child,
Vanquished not, but reconciled,
Free from curb of aught above
Save the lovely curb of love.

Love through dreams of souls divine
Fain would shine

Round a dawn whose light and song
Then should right our mutual wrong—
Speak, and seal the love-lit law
Sweet Assisi's seer foresaw.

Dreams were theirs; yet haply may
Dawn a day
When such friends and fellows born,
Seeing our earth as fair at morn,
May for wiser love's sake see
More of heaven's deep heart than we.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

SONG—THE OWL

I

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch,
Twice or thrice his roundelay,

Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE THROSTLE

"Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again."
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear.
And all the winters are hidden.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE BLACKBIRD

O Blackbird; sing me something well;
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou mayst warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry;
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP VI

HUMAN RELATIONS

SUB-GROUP A

ROMANTIC LOVE

Longing

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For then the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Come, as thou cam'st a thousand times,
A messenger from radiant climes,
And smile on thy new world, and be
As kind to others as to me!

Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth;
And part my hair, and kiss my brow,
And say: My love! why sufferest thou?

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For then the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Matthew Arnold.

Stanzas

I'll not weep that thou art going to leave me,
There's nothing lovely here;

And doubly will the dark world grieve me,
While thy heart suffers there.

I'll not weep because the summer's glory
Must always end in gloom;
And, follow out the happiest story—
It closes with a tomb!

And I am weary of the anguish
Increasing winters bear;
Weary to watch the spirit languish
Through years of dead despair.

So, if a tear, when thou art dying,
Should haply fall from me,
It is but that my soul is sighing,
To go and rest with thee.

Emily Brontë

INSUFFICIENCY

I

There is no one beside thee and no one above thee,
Thou standest alone as the nightingale sings!
And my words that would praise thee are impotent things,
For none can express thee though all should approve thee.
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

II

Say, what can I do for thee? weary thee, grieve thee?
Lean on thy shoulder, new burdens to add?
Weep my tears over thee, making thee sad?
Oh, hold me not—love me not! let me retrieve thee.
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leave thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He bears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS

I

Love me, Sweet, with all thou art,
  Feeling, thinking, seeing;
Love me in the lightest part,
  Love me in full being.

II

Love me with thine open youth
  In its frank surrender;
With the vowing of thy mouth
  With its silence tender.

III

Love me with thine azure eyes,
  Made for earnest granting;
Taking colour from the skies,
  Can Heaven's truth be wanting?

IV

Love me with their lids, that fall
Snow-like at first meeting;
Love me with thine heart, that all
Neighbours then see beating.

V

Love me with thine hand stretched out
Freely—open-minded;
Love me with thy loitering foot,—
Hearing one behind it.

VI

Love me with thy voice, that turns
Sudden faint above me;
Love me with thy blush that burns
When I murmur Love me!

VII

Love me with thy thinking soul,
Break it to love-sighing;
Love me with thy thoughts that roll
On through living—dying.

VIII

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,
When the world has crowned thee;
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,
With the angels round thee.

IX

Love me pure, as musers do,
Up the woodlands shady:

Love me gaily, fast and true,
As a winsome lady.

X

Through all hopes that keep us brave,
Farther off or nigher,
Love me for the house and grave,
And for something higher.

XI

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, Dear,
Woman's love no fable,
I will love thee—half a year—
As a man is able.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in
the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the
heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the
shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder,
wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were
for me
In the kiss of one girl.

Robert Browning

From THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

Such a starved bank of moss
  Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
  Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
  Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
  Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
  Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
  That was thy face!

Robert Browning

From A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

Mertoun's Song

There's a woman like a dew-drop, she's so purer than the purest;
And her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith's the surest:
And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre
Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,
Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-misted marble:

Then her voice's music . . . call it the well's bubbling,
the bird's warble!

And this woman says, "My days were sunless and my
nights were moonless,
Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's heart's
outbreak tuneless,
If you loved me not!" And I who—(ah, for words of
flame!) adore her,
Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before
her—
I may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice
takes me,
And by noontide as by midnight make her mine, as hers
she makes me!

Robert Browning

From SONGS IN ABSENCE

That out of sight is out of mind
Is true of most we leave behind;
It is not sure, nor can be true,
My own and only love, of you.

They were my friends, 'twas sad to part;
Almost a tear began to start;
But yet as things run on they find
That out of sight is out of mind.

For men, that will not idlers be,
Must lend their hearts to things they see;

And friends who leave them far behind,
When out of sight are out of mind.

I blame it not; I think that when
The cold and silent meet again,
Kind hearts will yet as erst be kind,
'Twas 'out of sight' was 'out of mind.'

I knew it when we parted, well,
I knew it, but was loth to tell;
I felt before, what now I find,
That 'out of sight' is 'out of mind.'

That friends, however friends they were,
Still deal with things as things occur,
And that, excepting for the blind,
What's out of sight is out of mind.

But love, the poets say, is blind;
So out of sight and out of mind
Need not, nor will, I think, be true,
My own and only love, of you.

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE WANDERER

(*Rondel*)

Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
The old, old Love that we knew of yore!
We see him stand by the open door,
With his great eyes sad, and his bosom swelling.

He makes as though in our arms repelling,
He fain would lie as he lay before;—
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
The old, old Love that we knew of yore!

Ah, who shall help us from over-spelling
That sweet forgotten, forbidden lore!
E'en as we doubt in our heart once more,
With a rush of tears to our eyelids welling,
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling.

Austin Dobson

A RONDEAU TO ETHEL

(Who wishes she had lived—
"In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn.")

"In teacup-times!" The style of dress
Would suit your beauty, I confess;
BELINDA-like, the patch you'd wear;
I picture you with powdered hair,—
You'd make a charming Shepherdess!

And I—no doubt—could well express
SIR PLUME'S complete conceitedness,—
Could poise a clouded cane with care
"In teacup-times!"

The parts would fit precisely—yes:
We should achieve a huge success!

You should disdain, and I despair,
With quite the true Augustan air;
But . . . could I love you more, or less,—
"In teacup-times?"

Austin Dobson

HAWTHORN AND LAVENDER

XVII

Look down, dear eyes, look down,
Lest you betray her gladness.
Dear brows, do naught but frown,
Lest men miscall my madness.

Come not, dear hands, so near,
Lest all besides come nearer.
Dear heart, hold me less dear,
Lest time hold nothing dearer.

Keep me, dear lips, O, keep
The great last word unspoken,
Lest other eyes go weep,
And other lives lie broken!

William E. Henley

MARGARET TO DOLCINO

Ask if I love thee, Oh, smiles cannot tell
Plainer what tears are now showing too well.
Had I not loved thee, my skies had been clear:

Had I not loved thee, I had not been here,
Weeping by thee.

Ask if I love thee, How else could I borrow
Price from man's slander, and strength from my sorrow?
Laugh when they sneer at the fanatic's bride,
Knowing no bliss, save to toil and abide
Weeping by thee.

Charles Kingsley

A HOPE

Twin stars, aloft in ether clear,
Around each other roll alway,
Within one common atmosphere
Of their own mutual light and day.

And myriad happy eyes are bent
Upon their changeless love alway;
As, strengthened by their one intent,
They pour the flood of life and day.

So we through this world's waning night
May, hand in hand, pursue our way;
Shed round us order, love, and light,
And shine unto the perfect day.

Charles Kingsley

LOVE IS ENOUGH

Love is enough: though the world be a-waning,
And the woods have no voice but the voice of complaining,

Though the sky be too dark for dim eyes to discover
The gold-cups and daisies fair blooming thereunder,
Though the hills be held shadows, and the sea a dark wonder,
And this day draw a veil over all deeds pass'd over,
Yet their hands shall not tremble, their feet shall not falter;
The void shall not weary, the fear shall not alter
These lips and these eyes of the loved and the lover.

William Morris

From THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

CANTO III—HONORIA

PRELUDES

I

The Lover

He meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destined maid; some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.
His merits in her presence grow,
To match the promise in her eyes,
And round her happy footsteps blow
The authentic airs of Paradise.
For joy of her he cannot sleep;
Her beauty haunts him all the night;

It melts his heart, it makes him weep
  For wonder, worship, and delight.
O, paradox of love, he longs,
  Most humble when he most aspires,
To suffer scorn and cruel wrongs
  From her he honours and desires.
Her graces make him rich, and ask
  No guerdon; this imperial style
Affronts him; he disdains to bask,
  The pensioner of her priceless smile.
He prays for some hard thing to do,
  Some work of fame and labour immense,
To stretch the languid bulk and thew
  Of love's fresh-born magnipotence.
No smallest boon were bought too dear,
  Though barter'd for his love-sick life;
Yet trusts he, with undaunted cheer,
  To vanquish heaven, and call her Wife.
He notes how queens of sweetness still
  Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate;
How, self-consign'd with lavish will,
  They ask but love proportionate;
How swift pursuit by small degrees,
  Love's tactic, works like miracle;
How valour, clothed in courtesies,
  Brings down the haughtiest citadel;
And therefore, though he merits not
  To kiss the braid upon her skirt,
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,
  Out-soars all possible desert.

Coventry Patmore

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a water'd shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a daïs of silk and down;
  Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
  And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
  In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
  Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

SONNET III

Lovesight

When do I see thee most, beloved one?
  When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
  Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)

Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

UNDERWOODS

IV

It is the season now to go
About the country high and low,
Among the lilacs hand in hand,
And two by two in fairy land.

The brooding boy, the sighing maid,
Wholly fain and half afraid,
Now meet along the hazel'd brook,
To pass and linger, pause and look.

A year ago, and blithely paired,
Their rough-and-tumble play they shared;
They kissed and quarrelled, laughed and cried,
A year ago at Eastertide.

With bursting heart, with fiery face,
She strove against him in the race;

He unabashed her garter saw,
That now would touch her skirts with awe.

Now by the stile a blaze she stops,
And his demurer eyes he drops;
Now they exchange averted sighs
Or stand and marry silent eyes.

And he to her a hero is
And sweeter she than primroses;
Their common silence dearer far
Than nightingale or mavis are.

Now when they sever wedded hands,
Joy trembles in their bosom-strands,
And lovely laughter leaps and falls
Upon their lips in madrigals.

Robert Louis Stevenson

SONGS OF TRAVEL

X

I know not how it is with you—
  I love the first and last,
The whole field of the present view,
  The whole flow of the past.

One tittle of the things that are,
  Nor you should change nor I—
One pebble in our path—one star
  In all our heaven of sky.

Our lives, and every day and hour,
One symphony appear:
One road, one garden—every flower
And every bramble dear.

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE OBLATION

Ask nothing more of me, sweet;
All I can give you I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More would be laid at your feet:
Love that should help you to live,
Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you, sweet,
Think you and breathe you and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet:
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wngs, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

From THE PRINCESS
SUMMER NIGHT

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP B

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

AUSTERITY OF POETRY

That son of Italy who tried to blow,
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star; and what to youth belong—
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! lo,

'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
Radiant, adorn'd outside; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.

Matthew Arnold

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

XII

Indeed this very love which is my boast,
And which, when rising up from breast to brow,

Doth crown me with a ruby large enow
To draw men's eyes and prove the inner cost, —
This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,
I should not love withal, unless that thou
Hadst set me an example, shown me how,
When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,
And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak
Of love even, as a good thing of my own:
Thy soul hath snatched up mine all faint and weak,
And placed it by thee on a golden throne,—
And that I love (O soul, we must be meek!)
Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

XXV

A heavy heart, Belovèd, have I borne
From year to year until I saw thy face,
And sorrow after sorrow took the place
Of all those natural joys as lightly worn
As the stringed pearls, each lifted in its turn
By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace
Were changed to long despairs, till God's own grace
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
My heavy heart. Then thou didst bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great
Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing
Which its own nature doth precipitate,
While thine doth close above it, mediating
Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

LOVE

We cannot live, except thus mutually
We alternate, aware or unaware,
The reflex act of life: and when we bear
Our virtue outward most impulsively,
Most full of invocation, and to be
Most instantly compellant, certes there
We live most life, whoever breathes most air
And counts his dying years by sun and sea.

But when a soul, by choice and conscience, doth
Throw out her full force on another soul,
The conscience and the concentration both
Make mere life, Love. For Life in perfect whole
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,
As Nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

THE LADY'S "YES"

I

"Yes," I answered you last night;
"No", this morning, sir, I say:
Colors seen by candle-light
Will not look the same by day.

II

When the viols played their best,
Lamps above and laughs below.
Love me sounded like a jest,
Fit for yes or fit for no.

III

Call me false or call me free,
—Vow, whatever light may shine,—
No man on your face shall see
Any grief for change on mine.

IV

Yet the sin is on us both;
Time to dance is not to woo;
Wooing light makes fickle troth,
Scorn of me recoils on you.

V

Learn to win a lady's faith
Nobly, as the thing is high,
Bravely, as for life and death,
With a loyal gravity.

VI

Lead her from the festive boards,
Point her to the starry skies;
Guard her, by your truthful words,
Pure from courtship's flatteries.

VII

By your truth she shall be true,
Ever true, as wives of yore,
And her yes once said to you,
SHALL be Yes forevermore.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

Let's contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep:
All be as before, Love,
—Only sleep!

What so wild as words are?
I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
Hawk on bough!

See the creature stalking
While we speak!
Hush and hide the talking,
Cheek on cheek!

What so false as truth is,
False to thee?
Where the serpent's tooth is
Shun the tree—

Where the apple reddens
Never pry—
Lest we lose our Edens,
Eve and I.

Be a god and hold me
With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
With thine arm!

Teach me, only teach, Love!
  As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
  Think thy thought—

Meet, if thou require it,
  Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
  In thy hands.

That shall be to-morrow,
  Not to-night:
I must bury sorrow
  Out of sight:

—Must a little weep, Love,
  (Foolish me!)
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee.

Robert Browning

From ONE WORD MORE

XVII

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!

XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you—
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!

Robert Browning

From AMOURS DE VOYAGE

XV Georgina Trevellyn to Louisa

. . . To-morrow we're starting for Florence,
Truly rejoiced, you may guess, to escape from republican terrors;
Mr. C. and Papa to escort us; we by vettura
Through Siena, and Georgy to follow and join us by Leghorn.
Then—Ah, what shall I say, my dearest? I tremble in thinking!

You will imagine my feelings,—the blending of hope and
of sorrow!
How can I bear to abandon Papa and Mamma and my
Sisters?
Dearest Louise, indeed it is very alarming; but, trust me
Ever, whatever may change, to remain your loving
Georgina.

Arthur Hugh Clough

VITAS HINNULEO

(*Rondel*)

You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother
Through trackless woods. If spring-winds sigh,
It vainly strives its fears to smother;—

Its trembling knees assail each other
When lizards stir the bramble dry;—
You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

And yet no Libyan lion I,—
No ravening thing to rend another;
Lay by your tears, your tremors by—
A Husband's better than a brother;
Nor shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

Austin Dobson

HAWTHORN AND LAVENDER

XXII

Between the dusk of a summer night
And the dawn of a summer day,
We caught at a mood as it passed in flight,
And we bade it stoop and stay.
And what with the dawn of night began
With the dusk of day was done;
For that is the way of woman and man,
When a hazard has made them one.

Arc upon arc, from shade to shine,
The World went thundering free;
And what was his errand but hers and mine —
The lords of him, I and she?
O, it's die we must, but it's live we can,
And the marvel of earth and sun
Is all for the joy of woman and man
And the longing that makes them one.

William E. Henley

DOLCINO TO MARGARET

The world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
Can never come over again,
Sweet wife:
No, never come over again.

For woman is warm though man be cold,
  And the night will hallow the day;
Till the heart which at even was weary and old
  Can rise in the morning gay,
    Sweet wife;
  To its work in the morning gay.

Charles Kingsley

THE MARRIED LOVER

From THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

Why, having won her, do I woo?
  Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
  But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;
Because her womanhood is such
  That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch
  Affirms no mean familiarness;
Nay, rather marks more fair the height
  Which can with safety so neglect
To dread, as lower ladies might,
  That grace could meet with disrespect;
Thus she with happy favor feeds
  Allegiance from a love so high
That thence no false conceit proceeds
  Of difference bridged, or state put by;
Because, although in act and word
  As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me lord,

Remind me 'tis by courtesy;
Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattained desert;
Because her gay and lofty brows,
When all is won which hope can ask,
Reflect a light of hopeless snows
That bright in virgin ether bask;
Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
Sacred to heaven; because, in short,
She's not and never can be mine.

Coventry Patmore

From THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

CANTO IX—SAHARA

Preludes I

The Wife's Tragedy

Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself.
How often flings for nought, and yokes
Her heart to an icicle or whim,
Whose each impatient word provokes
Another, not from her, but him;
While she, too gentle even to force
His penitence by kind replies,

Waits by, expecting his remorse,
With pardon in her pitying eyes;
And if he once, by shame oppress'd,
A comfortable word confers,
She leans and weeps against his breast,
And seems to think the sin was hers;
And whilst his love has any life,
Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
Dearly devoted to his arms;
She loves with love that cannot tire
And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love springs higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone.

Coventry Patmore

THE UNSEEN WORLD—WIFE TO HUSBAND

Pardon the faults in me,
For the love of years ago:
Good-bye.
I must drift across the sea,
I must sink into the snow,
I must die.

You can bask in this sun,
You can drink wine, and eat:
Good-bye.
I must gird myself and run,
Though with unready feet:
I must die.

Blank sea to sail upon,
Cold bed to sleep in:
Good-bye.
While you clasp, I must be gone
For all your weeping:
I must die.

A kiss for one friend,
And a word for two,—
Good-bye.
A lock that you must send,
A kindness you must do:
I must die.

Not a word for you,—
Not a lock or kiss,
Good-bye.
We, one, must part in two;
Verily death is this:
I must die.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

LOVE'S REDEMPTION

O Thou who at Love's hour ecstatically
Unto my lips dost evermore present
The body and blood of Love in sacrament;
Whom I have neared and felt thy breath to be

The inmost incense of his sanctuary;
Who without speech hast owned him, and intent
Upon his will, thy life with mine hast blent,
And murmured o'er the cup, Remember me!—

O what from thee the grace, for me the prize,
And what to Love the glory,—when the whole
Of the deep stair thou tread'st to the dim shoal
And weary water of the place of sighs,
And there dost work deliverance, as thine eyes
Draw up my prisoned spirit to thy soul!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

ROMANCE

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

Robert Louis Stevenson

MY WIFE

Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
  Steel-true and blade-straight,
The great artificer
  Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire;
A love that life could never tire,
  Death quench or evil stir,
The mighty master
  Gave to her.

Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
  Heart-whole and soul-free
The august father
  Gave to me.

Robert Louis Stevenson

From the Chorus

ATALANTA IN CALYDON

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair;
  thou art goodly, O Love;
Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a dove.
Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of the sea;
Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee.
Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame of fire;

Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire;
And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a maid;
Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight makes
afraid;
As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal breath:
But Fate is the name of her; and his name is Death.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

From THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,

The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Songs from THE PRINCESS

As Thro' the Land

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
Oh we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
Oh there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP C

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD

What made my heart, at Newstead, fullest swell?—
'Twas not the thought of Byron, of his cry
Stormily sweet, his Titan-agony;
It was the sight of that Lord Arundel

Who struck, in heat, his child he loved so well,
And his child's reason flicker'd, and did die.
Painted (he will'd it) in the gallery
They hang; the picture doth the story tell.

Behold the stern, mail'd father, staff in hand!
The little fair-hair'd son, with vacant gaze,
Where no more lights of sense or knowledge are!

Methinks the woe, which made that father stand
Baring his dumb remorse to future days,
Was woe than Byron's woe more tragic far.

Matthew Arnold

ENCOURAGEMENT

I do not weep; I would not weep;
  Our mother needs no tears:
Dry thine eyes, too; 'tis vain to keep
  This causeless grief for years.

What though her brow be changed and cold,
  Her sweet eyes closed for ever?
What though the stone—the darksome mould—
  Our mortal bodies sever?

What though her hand smooth ne'er again
  Those silken locks of thine?
Nor, through long hours of future pain,
  Her kind face o'er thee shine?

Remember still, she is not dead;
  She sees us, sister, now;
Laid, where her angel spirit fled,
  'Mid heath and frozen snow.

And from that world of heavenly light
  Will she not always bend
To guide us in our lifetime's night,
  And guard us to the end?

Thou knowest she will; and thou may'st mourn
  That we are left below:
But not that she can ne'er return
  To share our earthly woe.

Emily Brontë

THE OUTCAST MOTHER

I've seen this dell in July's shine,
  As lovely as an angel's dream;
Above—Heaven's depth of blue divine,
  Around—the evening's golden beam.

I've seen the purple heather-bell
Look out by many a storm-worn stone;
And, oh! I've known such music swell,—
Such wild notes wake these passes lone—

So soft, yet so intensely felt;
So low, yet so distinctly heard;
My breath would pause, my eyes would melt,
And tears would dew the green heath-sward.

I'd linger here a summer day,
Nor care how fast the hours flew by,
Nor mark the sun's departing ray
Smile sadly from the dark'ning sky.

Then, then, I might have laid me down,
And dreamed my sleep would gentle be;
I might have left thee, darling one,
And thought thy God was guarding thee!

But now there is no wand'ring glow,
No gleam to say that God is nigh;
And coldly spreads the couch of snow
And harshly sounds thy lullaby.

Forests of heather, dark and long,
Wave their brown branching arms above;
And they must soothe thee with their song,
And they must shield my child of love.

Alas! the flakes are heavily falling,
They cover fast each guardian crest;
And chilly white their shroud is palling
Thy frozen limbs and freezing breast.

Wakes up the storm more madly wild,
The mountain drifts are tossed on high;
Farewell, unbless'd, unfriended child
I cannot bear to watch thee die!

Emily Brontë

MOTHERLESS *from* AURORA LEIGH

I write. My mother was a Florentine,
Whose rare blue eyes were shut from seeing me
When scarcely I was four years old; my life,
A poor spark snatched up from a failing lamp
Which went out therefore. She was weak and frail;
She could not bear the joy of giving life—
The mother's rapture slew her. If her kiss
Had left a longer weight upon my lips,
It might have steadied the uneasy breath,
And reconciled and fraternized my soul
With a new order. As it was, indeed,
I felt a mother-want about the world,
And still went seeking, like a bleating lamb
Left out at night, in shutting up the fold,—
As restless as a nest-deserted bird
Grown chill through something being away, though what
It knows not. I, Aurora Leigh, was born
To make my father sadder, and myself
Not overjoyous, truly. Women know
The way to rear up children (to be just)
They know a simple, merry, tender knack
Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes,
And stringing pretty words that make no sense,

And kissing full sense into empty words;
Which things are corals to cut life upon,
Although such trifles: children learn by such
Love's holy earnest in a pretty play,
And get not over-early solemnized, —
But seeing, as in a rose-bush, Love's Divine,
Which burns and hurts not,—not a single bloom,—
Become aware and unafraid of Love.
Such good do mothers. Fathers love as well.
—Mine did, I know,—but still with heavier brains,
And wills more consciously responsible,
And not as wisely, since less foolishly;
So mothers have God's license to be missed.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From THE RING AND THE BOOK
POMPILIA

Nobody did me one disservice more,
Spoke coldly or looked strangely, broke the love
I lay in the arms of, till my boy was born,
Born all in love, with naught to spoil the bliss
A whole long fortnight: in a life like mine
A fortnight filled with bliss is long and much.
All women are not mothers of a boy,
Though they live twice the length of my whole life,
And, as they fancy, happily all the same.
There I lay, then, all my great fortnight long,
As if it would continue, broaden out
Happily more and more, and lead to heaven:

Christmas before me,—was not that a chance?
I never realized God's birth before—
How he grew likest God in being born.
This time I felt like Mary, had my babe
Lying a little on my breast like hers.
So all went on till, just four days ago—
The night and the tap.

Even for my babe, my boy, there's safety thence—
From the sudden death of me, I mean: we poor
Weak souls, how we endeavor to be strong!
I was already using up my life,—
This portion, now, should do him such a good,
This other go to keep off such an ill!
The great life; see, a breath and it is gone!
So is detached, so left all by itself
The little life, the fact which means so much.
Shall not God stoop the kindlier to his work,
His marvel of creation, foot would crush
Now that the hand he trusted to receive
And hold it, lets the treasure fall perforce?
The better; he shall have in orphanage
His own way all the clearlier: if my babe
Outlived the hour—and he has lived two weeks—
It is through God who knows I am not by.
Who is it makes the soft gold hair turn black,
And sets the tongue, might lie so long at rest,
Trying to talk? Let us leave God alone!
Why should I doubt he will explain in time
What I feel now, but fail to find the words?
My babe nor was, nor is, nor yet shall be

Count Guido Franceschini's child at all—
Only his mother's, born of love not hate!
So shall I have my rights in after-time.
It seems absurd, impossible to-day;
So seems so much else, not explained but known!

Robert Browning

From JACOB

Come near to me, my sons: your father goes,
The hour of his departure draweth nigh.
Ah me! this eager rivalry of life,
This cruel conflict for pre-eminence,
This keen supplanting of the dearest kin,
Quick seizure and fast unrelaxing hold
Of vantage place; the stony hard resolve,
The chase, the competition, and the craft
Which seems to be the poison of our life,
And yet is the condition of our life!
To have done things on which the eye with shame
Looks back, the closed hand clutching still the prize!—
Alas! what of all these things shall I say!
Take me away unto Thy sleep, O God!
I thank Thee it is over, yet I think
It was a work appointed me of Thee.
How is it? I have striven all my days
To do my duty to my house and hearth,
And to the purpose of my father's race,
Yet is my heart therewith not satisfied.

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE CRADLE

How steadfastly she worked at it!
  How lovingly had drest
With all her would-be-mother's wit
  That little rosy nest!

How longingly she'd hung on it!—
  It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
  A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
  Ere bleak December fled;
That rosy nest he never prest . . .
  Her coffin was his bed.

Austin Dobson

ECHOES

MATRI DILECTISSIMAE

I. M.

In the waste hour
Between to-day and yesterday
We watched, while on my arm—
Living flesh of her flesh, bone of her bone—
Dabbled in sweat the sacred head
Lay uncomplaining, still, contemptuous, strange:
Till the dear face turned dead,
And to a sound of lamentation

The good, heroic soul with all its wealth—
Its sixty years of love and sacrifice,
Suffering and passionate faith—was reabsorbed
In the inexorable Peace,
And life was changed to us for evermore.

Was nothing left of her but tears
Like blood-drops from the heart?
Nought save remorse
For duty unfulfilled, justice undone,
And charity ignored? Nothing but love,
Forgiveness, reconcilement, where in truth,
But for this passing
Into the unimaginable abyss
These things had never been?

Nay, there were we,
Her five strong sons!
To her Death came—the great Deliverer came!—
As equal comes to equal, throne to throne.
She was a mother of men.

The stars shine as of old. The unchanging River,
Bent on his errand of immortal law,
Works his appointed way.
To the immemorial sea.
And the brave truth comes overwhelmingly home:—
That she in us yet works and shines,
Lives and fulfills herself,
Unending as the river and the stars.

Dearest, live on
In such an immortality
As we thy sons,
Born of thy body and nursed
At those wild, faithful breasts,
Can give—of generous thoughts,
And honourable words, and deeds
That make men half in love with fate!
Live on, O brave and true,
In us thy children, in ours whose life is thine—
Our best and theirs! What is that best but thee—
Thee, and thy gift to us, to pass
Like light along the infinite of space
To the immitigable end?

Between the river and the stars,
O royal and radiant soul,
Thou dost return, thine influences return
Upon thy children as in life, and death
Turns stingless! What is Death
But Life in act? How should the Unteeming Grave
Be victor over thee,
Mother, a mother of men?

William E. Henley

From THE SAINT'S TRAGEDY

Deep in the warm vale the village is sleeping,
Sleeping the firs on the bleak rock above;
Nought wakes, save grateful hearts, silently creeping
Up to the Lord in the might of their love.

What Thou hast given to me, Lord, here I bring Thee,
Odour, and light, and the magic of gold;
Feet which must follow Thee, lips which must sing Thee,
Limbs which must ache for Thee ere they grow old.

What Thou hast given to me, Lord, here I tender,
Life of mine own life, the fruit of my love;
Take him, yet leave him me, till I shall render
Count of the precious charge, kneeling above.

Charles Kingsley

AIRLY BEACON

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
With his baby on my knee!

Charles Kingsley

THE SUMMER SEA

Soft soft wind, from out the sweet south sliding,
Waft thy silver cloud webs athwart the summer sea;

Thin thin threads of mist on dewy fingers twining
Weave a veil of dappled gauze to shade my babe and me.

Deep deep Love, within thine own abyss abiding,
Pour Thyself abroad, O Lord, on earth and air and sea;
Worn weary hearts within Thy holy temple hiding,
Shield from sorrow, sin, and shame my helpless babe and me.

Charles Kingsley

REGINA COELI

Say, did his sisters wonder what could Joseph see
In a mild, silent little Maid like thee?
And was it awful in that narrow house,
With God for Babe and Spouse?
Nay, like thy simple, female sort, each one
Apt to find Him in Husband and in Son,
Nothing to thee came strange in this.
Thy wonder was but wondrous bliss:
Wondrous, for, though
True Virgin lives not but does know,
(Howbeit none ever yet confess'd)
That God lies really in her breast,
Of thine He made His special nest
And so
All mothers worship little feet,
And kiss the very ground they've trod;
But, ah, thy little Baby sweet
Who was indeed thy God!

Coventry Patmore

REST

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hush'd in and curtain'd with a blessed dearth
Of all that irk'd her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

Christina G. Rossetti

TO MY FIRST LOVE, MY MOTHER

Dedicatory Sonnet

Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome
Has many sonnets; so here now shall be
One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home,
To my first Love, my Mother, on whose knee
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome;
Whose service is my special dignity,
And she my lodestar while I go and come.
And so because you love me, and because
I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath

Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honored name:
In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
Of time and change and mortal life and death.

Christina G. Rossetti

From FRANCESCO DA BARBERINO

V Sentenze of Caution

Say, wouldst thou guard thy son,
That sorrow he may shun?
Begin at the beginning
And let him keep from sinning.
Wouldst guard thy house? One door
Make to it, and no more.
Wouldst guard thine orchard-wall?
Be free of fruit to all.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

MATER TRIUMPHANS

Son of my woman's body, you go, to the drum and fife,
To taste the colour of love and the other side of life—
From out of the dainty the rude, the strong from out of the frail,
Eternally through the ages from the female comes the male.

The ten fingers and toes, and the shell-like nail on each,
The eyes blind as gems and the tongue attempting speech;

Impotent hands in my bosom, and yet they shall wield
the sword!
Drugged with slumber and milk, you wait the day of
the Lord.

Infant bridegroom, uncrowned king, unanointed priest,
Soldier, lover, explorer, I see you nozzle the breast.
You that grope in my bosom shall load the ladies with
rings,
You, that came forth through the doors, shall burst the
doors of Kings.

Robert Louis Stevenson

TO MY FATHER

Peace and her huge invasion to these shores
Puts daily home; innumerable sails
Dawn on the far horizon and draw near;
Innumerable loves, uncounted hopes
To our wild coasts, not darkling now, approach:
Not now obscure, since thou and thine are there,
And bright on the lone isle, the foundered reef,
The long, resounding foreland, Pharos stands.

These are thy works, O father, these thy crown;
Whether on high the air be pure, they shine
Along the yellowing sunset, and all night
Among the unnumbered stars of God they shine;
Or whether fogs arise and far and wide
The low sea-level drown—each finds a tongue

And all night long the tolling bell resounds:
So shine, so toll, till night be overpast,
Till the stars vanish, till the sun return,
And in the haven rides the fleet secure.

In the first hour, the seaman in his skiff
Moves through the unmoving bay, to where the town
Its earliest smoke into the air upbreathes
And the rough hazels climb along the beach.
To the tugg'd oar the distant echo speaks.
The ship lies resting, where by reef and roost
Thou and thy lights have led her like a child.

This hast thou done, and I—can I be base?
I must arise, O father, and to port
Some lost, complaining seaman pilot home.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A CHILD'S FUTURE

What will it please you, my darling, hereafter to be,
Fame upon land will you look for, or glory by sea?
Gallant your life will be always, and all of it free.
Free as the wind when the heart of the twilight is stirred
Eastward, and sounds from the springs of the sunrise
are heard:

Free—and we know not another as infinite word.
Darkness or twilight or sunlight may compass us round,
Hate may arise up against us, or hope may confound;
Love may forsake us; yet may not the spirit be bound.

Free in oppression of grief as in ardor of joy
Still may the soul be, and each to her strength as a toy:
Free in the glance of the man as the smile of the boy.
Freedom alone is the salt and the spirit that gives
Life, and without her is nothing that verily lives:
Death cannot slay her: she laughs upon death and forgives.

Brightest and hardiest of roses anear and afar
Glitters the blithe little face of you, round as a star:
Liberty bless you and keep you to be as you are.
England and liberty bless you and keep you to be
Worthy the name of their child and the sight of their sea:
Fear not at all; for a slave, if he fears not, is free.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

Lullaby from THE PRINCESS

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;

Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP VII

SOCIAL RELATIONS

SUB-GROUP A

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

From How Clear She Shines

I'll think, there's not one world above,
  Far as these straining eyes can see,
Where Wisdom ever laughed at Love,
  Or Virtue crouched to Infamy;
Where, writhing 'neath the strokes of Fate,
  The mangled wretch was forced to smile;
To match his patience 'gainst her hate,
  His heart rebellious all the while:
Where Pleasure still will lead to wrong,
  And helpless Reason warn in vain;
And Truth is weak, and Treachery strong;
  And Joy the surest path to Pain;
And Peace, the lethargy of Grief;
  And Hope, a phantom of the soul;
And Life, a labour, void and brief;
  And Death, the despot of the whole!

Emily Brontë

From Aurora Leigh

But when the thrushes sang
And shook my pulses and the elms' new leaves;
At which I turned, and held my finger up,
And bade him mark that, howsoe'er the world
Went ill, as he related, certainly
The thrushes still sang in it. At the word

His brow would soften,—and he bore with me
In melancholy patience, not unkind,
While breaking into voluble ecstasy
I flattered all the beauteous country round,
As poets use, the skies, the clouds, the fields,
The happy violets hiding from the roads
The primroses run down to, carrying gold;
The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out
Impatient horns and tolerant churning-mouths
'Twixt dripping ash-boughs,—hedgerows all alive
With birds, and gnats, and large white butterflies
Which look as if the May-flower had caught life
And palpitated forth upon the wind;
Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver mist,
Farms, granges, doubled up among the hills;
And cattle grazing in the watered vales,
And cottage-chimneys smoking from the woods,
And cottage-gardens smelling everywhere,
Confused with smell of orchards. "See," I said,
"And see! is God not with us on the earth?
And shall we put Him down by aught we do?
Who says there's nothing for the poor and vile
Save poverty and wickedness? behold!"
And ankle-deep in English grass I leaped
And clapped my hands, and called all very fair.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From AURORA LEIGH

I call you hard
To general suffering. Here's the world half blind

With intellectual light, half brutalized
With civilization, having caught the plague
In silks from Tarsus, shrieking east and west
Along a thousand railroads mad with pain
And sin too! . . . does one woman of you all,
(You who weep easily) grow pale to see
This tiger shake his cage?—does one of you
Stand still from dancing, stop from stringing pearls,
And pine and die because of the great sum
Of universal anguish?—Show me a tear
Wet as Cordelia's, in eyes bright as yours,
Because the world is mad. You cannot count,
That you should weep for this account, not you!
You weep for what you know. A red-haired child
Sick in a fever, if you touch him once,
Though but so little as with a finger-tip,
Will set you weeping; but a million sick—
You could as soon weep for the rule of three
Or compound fractions. Therefore, this same world,
Uncomprehended by you.—Women as you are,
Mere women, personal and passionate,
You give us doting mothers, and perfect wives,
Sublime Madonnas, and enduring saints!
We get no Christ from you.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From CRISTINA

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure though seldom, are denied us,

When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse
Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a lifetime
That away the rest have trifled.

Robert Browning

From A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.

Robert Browning.

WHY I AM A LIBERAL

All that I am now, all I hope to be,—
"Why?" Because all I haply can and do,
Whence comes it save from fortune setting free
Body and soul the purpose to pursue,
God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,
Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men—each in his degree
Also God-guided—bear, and gayly, too?

But little do or can the best of us:
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is
"Why."

Robert Browning

THE LATEST DECALOGUE

Thou shalt have one God only; who
Would be at the expense of two?
No graven images may be
Worshipped, except the currency.
Swear not at all; for, for thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse.
At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend.
Honor thy parents; that is, all

From whom advancement may befall.
Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.
Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it.
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
When it's so lucrative to cheat.
Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly.
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition.

Arthur Hugh Clough

ECHOES

VI

Praise the generous gods for giving
  In a world of wrath and strife,
With a little time for living,
  Unto all the joy of life.

At whatever source we drink it,
  Art or love or faith or wine,
In whatever terms we think it,
  It is common and divine.

Praise the high gods, for in giving
  This to man, and this alone,
They have made his chance of living
  Shine the equal of their own.

William E. Henley

Ballade of Truisms

Gold or silver, every day,
Dies to gray.
There are knots in every skein.
Hours of work and hours of play
Fade away
Into one immense Inane.
Shadow and substance, chaff and grain,
Are as vain
As the foam or as the spray.
Life goes crooning, faint and fain,
One refrain:—
'If it could be always May!'

Though the earth be green and gay,
Though, they say,
Man the cup of heaven may drain;
Though, his little world to sway
He display
Hoard on hoard of pith and brain:
Autumn brings a mist and rain
That constrain
Him and his to know decay,
Where undimmed the lights that wane
Would remain,
If it could be always May.

Yea, alas, must turn to Nay,
Flesh to clay.
Chance and Time are ever twain.

Men may scoff, and men may pray,
But they pay
Every pleasure with a pain.
Life may soar, and Fortune deign
To explain
Where her prizes hide and stay;
But we lack the lusty train
We should gain,
If it could be always May.

ENVOY

Time, the pedagogue, his cane
Might retain,
But his charges all would stray
Truanting in every lane—
Jack with Jane—
If it could be always May.

William E. Henley

THE WORLD'S AGE

Who will say the world is dying?
Who will say our prime is past?
Sparks from Heaven, within us lying,
Flash, and will flash till the last.
Fools! who fancy Christ mistaken;
Man a tool to buy and sell;
Earth a failure, God-forsaken,
Anteroom of Hell.

Still the race of Hero-spirits
  Pass the lamp from hand to hand,
Age from age the Words inherits
  'Wife, and Child, and Fatherland.'
Still the youthful hunter gathers
  Fiery joy from wold and wood;
He will dare as dared his fathers
  Give him cause as good.

While the slave bewails his fetters;
  While an orphan pleads in vain;
While an infant lisps his letters,
  Heir of all the ages' gain;
While a lip grows ripe for kissing;
  While a moan from man is wrung;
Know, by every want and blessing,
  That the world is young.

Charles Kingsley

The Voice of Toil

I heard men saying, Leave hope and praying,
All days shall be as all have been;
To-day and to-morrow bring fear and sorrow,
The never-ending toil between.

When Earth was young 'mid toil and hunger,
In hope we strove, and our hands were strong;
Then great men led us, with words they fed us,
And bade us right the earthly wrong.

Go read in story their deeds and glory,
Their names amidst the nameless dead;
Turn them from lying to us slow-dying
In that good world to which they led;

Where fast and faster our iron master,
The thing we made, for ever drives,
Bids us grind treasure and fashion pleasure
For other hopes and other lives;

Where home is a hovel and dull we grovel,
Forgetting that the world is fair;
Where no babe we cherish, lest its very soul perish;
Where mirth is crime, and love a snare.

Who now shall lead us, what god shall heed us
As we lie in the hell our hands have won?
For us are no rulers but fools and befoolers,
The great are fallen, the wise men gone.

I heard men saying, Leave tears and praying,
The sharp knife heedeth not the sheep;
Are we not stronger than the rich and the wronger,
When day breaks over dreams and sleep?

Come, shoulder to shoulder ere the world grows older!
Help lies in naught but thee and me;
Hope is before us, and the long years that bore us
Bore leaders more than men may be.

Let dead hearts tarry and trade and marry,
And trembling nurse their dreams of mirth,

While we the living our lives are giving
To bring the bright new world to birth.

Come, shoulder to shoulder ere earth grows older!
The Cause spreads over land and sea;
Now the world shaketh, and fear awaketh,
And joy at last for thee and me.

William Morris

Magna Est Veritas

Here, in this little Bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail;
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

Coventry Patmore

A Testimony

I said of laughter: it is vain.
  Of mirth I said: what profits it?
  Therefore I found a book, and writ
Therein how ease and also pain,
How health and sickness, every one
Is vanity beneath the sun.

Man walks in a vain shadow; he
  Disquieteth himself in vain.
  The things that were shall be again;
The rivers do not fill the sea,
But turn back to their secret source;
The winds too turn upon their course.

Our treasures moth and rust corrupt,
  Or thieves break through and steal, or they
  Make themselves wings and fly away.
One man made merry as he supped,
Nor guessed how when that night grew dim
His soul would be required of him.

We build our houses on the sand
  Comely withoutside and within;
  But when the winds and rains begin
To beat on them, they cannot stand:
They perish, quickly overthrown,
Loose from the very basement stone.

All things are vanity, I said:
  Yea vanity of vanities.
  The rich man dies; and the poor dies:
The worm feeds sweetly on the dead.
Whate'er thou lackest, keep this trust:
All in the end shall have but dust.

The one inheritance, which best
  And worst alike shall find and share:
  The wicked cease from troubling there

And there the weary be at rest;
There all the wisdom of the wise
Is vanity of vanities.

Man flourishes as a green leaf,
  And as a leaf doth pass away;
  Or as a shade that cannot stay
And leaves no track, his course is brief:
Yet man doth hope and fear and plan
Till he is dead:—oh foolish man!

Our eyes cannot be satisfied
  With seeing, nor our ears be filled
  With hearing: yet we plant and build
And buy and make our borders wide;
We gather wealth, we gather care,
But know not who shall be our heir.

Why should we hasten to arise
  So early, and so late take rest?
  Our labour is not good; our best
Hopes fade; our heart is stayed on lies.
Verily, we sow wind; and we
Shall reap the whirlwind, verily.

He who hath little shall not lack;
  He who hath plenty shall decay:
  Our fathers went; we pass away;
Our children follow on our track:
So generations fail, and so
They are renewed and come and go.

The earth is fattened with our dead;
  She swallows more and doth not cease:
  Therefore her wind and oil increase
And her sheaves are not numbered;
Therefore her plants are green, and all
Her pleasant trees lusty and tall.

Therefore the maidens cease to sing,
  And the young men are very sad;
  Therefore the sowing is not glad,
And mournful is the harvesting.
Of high and low, of great and small,
Vanity is the lot of all.

A King dwelt in Jerusalem;
  He was the wisest man on earth;
  He had all riches from his birth,
And pleasures till he tired of them;
Then, leaving tested all things, he
Witnessed that all are vanity.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

Sonnet XLIV

The Sun's Shame

Beholding youth and hope in mockery caught
  From life; and mocking pulses that remain
  When the soul's death of bodily death is fain;

Honour unknown, and honour known unsought;
And penury's sedulous self-torturing thought
  On gold, whose master therewith buys his bane;
  And longed-for woman longing all in vain
For lonely man with love's desire distraught;
And wealth, and strength, and power, and pleasantness,
  Given unto bodies of whose souls men say,
  None poor and weak, slavish and foul, as they:—
Beholding these things, I behold no less
The blushing morn and blushing eve confess
  The shame that loads the intolerable day.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

Robert Louis Stevenson

From ATALANTA IN CALYDON

Before the beginning of years,
  There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
  Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
  Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance, fallen from heaven;
  And madness, risen from hell;
Strength, without hands to smite;
  Love, that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light;
  And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
  Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
  From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
  And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
  In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
  And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after,
  And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
  That his strength might endure for a span,
With travail and heavy sorrow,
  The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

IN MEMORIAM LIV

O yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,

Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

IN MEMORIAM—CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP B

NATION

England

Whoever lives true life will love true love.
I learnt to love that England. Very oft,
Before the day was born, or otherwise
Through secret windings of the afternoons,
I threw my hunters off and plunged myself
Among the deep hills, as a hunted stag
Will take the waters, shivering with the fear
And passion of the course. And when, at last
Escap'd,—so many a green slope built on slope
Betwixt me and the enemy's house behind,
I dar'd to rest, or wander, in a rest
Made sweeter for the step upon the grass,—
And view the ground's most gentle dimplement,
(As if God's finger touch'd but did not press
In making England!) such an up and down
Of verdure,—nothing too much up or down,
A ripple of land; such little hills, the sky
Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb;
Such nooks of valleys, lin'd with orchises,
Fed full of noises by invisible streams;
And open pastures, where you scarcely tell
White daisies from white dew,—at intervals
The mythic oaks and elm trees standing out
Self-pois'd upon their prodigy of shade,—

I thought my father's land was worthy too
Of being my Shakespeare's . . . .

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

DE GUSTIBUS

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
(If our loves remain)
In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
Making love, say,—
The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
With the beanflowers' boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands)—
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree— 't is a cypress—stands
By the many hundred years red-rusted,

Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,
My sentinel to guard the sands

To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?
While, in the house, forever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news to-day—the king
Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
—She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her, Calais)
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, "Italy."
Such lovers old are I and she
So it always was, so shall ever be!

Robert Browning

HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died
away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz
Bay;

Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me; how can I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

Robert Browning

From SONGS IN ABSENCE

Green fields of England! wheresoe'er
Across this watery waste we fare,
Your image at our hearts we bear
Green fields of England, everywhere.

Sweet eyes in England, I must flee
Past where the waves' last confines be,
Ere your loved smile I cease to see,
Sweet eyes in England, dear to me.

Dear home in England, safe and fast
If but in thee my lot lie cast,
The past shall seem a nothing past
To thee, dear home, if won at last;
Dear home in England, won at last.

Arthur Hugh Clough

A Ballad to Queen Elizabeth

Of the Spanish Armada

King Philip had vaunted his claims;
  He had sworn for a year he would sack us;
With an army of heathenish names
  He was coming to fagot and stack us;
  Like the thieves of the sea he would track us,
And shatter our ships on the main;
  But we had bold Neptune to back us,—
And where are the galleons of Spain?

His carackes were christened of dames
  To the kirtles whereof he would tack us;
With his saints and his gilded stern-frames,
  He had thought like an egg-shell to crack us;
  Now Howard may get to his Flaccus,
And Drake to his Devon again,
  And Hawkins bowl rubbers to Bacchus,—
For where are the galleons of Spain?

Let his Majesty hang to St. James
  The axe that he whetted to hack us;
He must play at some lustier games
  Or at sea he can hope to out-thwack us;
  To his mines of Peru he would pack us
To tug at his bullet and chain;
  Alas! that his Greatness should lack us!—
But where are the galleons of Spain?

ENVOY

Gloriana!—the Don may attack us
Whenever his stomach be fain;
He must reach us before he can rack us, . . .
And where are the galleons of Spain?

Austin Dobson

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the world on your bugles blown!

Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,

To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown?

Ever the faith endures,
England, my England:—
"Take and break us; we are yours,
England, my own!
Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky:
Death is death; but we shall die
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
To the stars on your bugles blown!"

They call you proud and hard,
England, my England:
You with worlds to watch and ward,
England, my own!
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies,
You could know nor dread nor ease
Were the Song on your bugles blown,
England,
Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of Ships whose might
England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,

Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,
There's the menace of the Word
In the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

William E. Henley

ALTON LOCKE'S SONG

Weep, weep, weep and weep,
For pauper, dolt, and slave!
Hark! from wasted moor and fen,
Feverous alley, stifling den,
Swells the wail of Saxon men—
Work! or the grave!

Down, down, down and down
With idler, knave, and tyrant!
Why for sluggards cark and moil?
He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil!
God's word's our warrant!

Up, up, up and up!
Face your game and play it!
The night is past, behold the sun!
The idols fall, the lie is done!
The Judge is set, the doom begun!
Who shall stay it?

Charles Kingsley

From PEACE

O England, how hast thou forgot,
In dullard care for undisturb'd increase
Of gold, which profits not,
The gain which once thou knew'st was for thy peace!
Honour is peace, the peace which does accord
Alone with God's glad word:
'My peace I send you, and I send a sword.'
O England, how hast thou forgot,
How fear'st the things which make for joy, not fear,
Confronted near.

Coventry Patmore

ITALIA, IO TI SALUTO!

To come back from the sweet South, to the North
  Where I was born, bred, look to die;
Come back to do my day's work in its day,
  Play out my play—
  Amen! amen! say I.

To see no more the country half my own,
  Nor hear the half familiar speech,
Amen! I say; I turn to that bleak North
  Whence I came forth—
  The South lies out of reach.

But when our swallows fly back to the South,
  To the sweet South, to the sweet South,

The tears may come again into my eyes
On the old wise,
And the sweet name to my mouth.

Christina G. Rossetti

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

Not that the earth is changing, O my God!
Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—
Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
Not therefore are we certain that the rod
Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world; though now
Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
So many kings:—not therefore, O my God!—

But because Man is parcelled out in men
Even thus; because, for any wrongful blow,
No man not stricken asks, 'I would be told
Why thou dost strike;' but his heart whispers then,
'He is he, I am I.' By this we know
That the earth falls asunder, being old.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

IN THE STATES

With half a heart I wander here
As from an age gone by
A brother—yet though young in years,
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,
Though both were English born.
I towards the night of time decline
You mount into the morn.

Youth shall grow great and strong and free,
But age must still decay:
To-morrow for the States—for me,
England and Yesterday.

Robert Louis Stevenson

NEW YEAR'S DAY

New Year, be good to England. Bid her name
Shine sunlike as of old on all the sea:
Make strong her soul: set all her spirit free:
Bind fast her homeborn foes with links of shame
More strong than iron and more keen than flame:
Seal up their lips for shame's sake: so shall she
Who was the light that lightened freedom be,
For all false tongues, in all men's eyes the same.

O last-born child of Time, earth's eldest lord,
God undiscrowned of godhead, who for man
Begets all good and evil things that live,
Do thou, his new-begotten son, implored
Of hearts that hope and fear not, make thy span
Bright with such light as history bids thee give.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE FORESTERS

There is no land like England
  Where'er the light of day be;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
  Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
  Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen,
  So tall and bold as they be.

And these will strike for England,
  And man and maid be free,
To foil and spoil the tyrant
  Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England
  Where'er the light of day be;
There are no wives like English wives,
  So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England
  Where'er the light of day be;
There are no maids like the English maids,
  So beautiful as they be.

And these shall wed with freemen,
  And all their sons be free,
To sing the songs of England
  Beneath the greenwood tree.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O Thou, that sendest out the man
  To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
  Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat
  Those men thine arms withstood,
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought—
  Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
  Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
  The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law
  The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine—The single note
From that deep chord which Hampden smote
  Will vibrate to the doom.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP C

WAR AND PEACE

THE LAST WORD

Creep into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese,
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot and passed,
Hotly charge—and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

Matthew Arnold

From MEROPE

And truly, in this ill-ruled world,
Well sometimes may the good desire

To give to virtue her dominion due!
Well may he long to interrupt
To reign of folly, usurpation ever,
Though fenced by sanction of a thousand years!
Well thirst to drag the wrongful ruler down;
Well purpose to pen back
Into the narrow path of right
The ignorant, headlong multitude,
Who blindly follow, ever,
Blind leaders, to their bane!

But who can say, without a fear:
That best, who ought to rule, am I;
The mob, who ought to obey, are these;
I the one righteous, they the many bad?
Who, without check of conscience, can aver
That he to power makes way by arms,
Sheds blood, imprisons, banishes, attaints,
Commits all deeds the guilty oftenest do,
Without a single guilty thought,
Arm'd for right only, and the general good?

Therefore, with censure unallay'd,
Therefore, with unexcepting ban,
Zeus and pure-thoughted Justice brand
Imperious self-asserting violence;
Sternly condemn the too bold man, who dares
Elect himself Heaven's destined arm;
And, knowing well man's inmost heart infirm
However noble the committer be,

His grounds however specious shown,
Turn with averted eyes from deeds of blood.

Matthew Arnold.

From STARS

O, stars, and dreams, and gentle night;
O, night and stars, return!
And hide me from the hostile light
That does not warm, but burn;

That drains the blood of suffering men;
Drinks tears, instead of dew;
Let me sleep through his blinding reign,
And only wake with you!

Emily Brontë

FIRST NEWS FROM VILLAFRANCA

I

Peace, peace, peace, do you say?
What!—with the enemy's guns in our ears?
With the country's wrong not rendered back?
What!—while Austria stands at bay
In Mantua, and our Venice bears
The cursed flag of the yellow and black?

II

Peace, peace, peace, do you say?
And this the Mincio? Where's the fleet,

And where's the sea? Are we all blind
Or mad with the blood shed yesterday,
Ignoring Italy under our feet,
And seeing things before, behind?

III

Peace, peace, peace, do you say?
What!—uncontested, undenied?
Because we triumph, we succumb?
A pair of Emperors stand in the way
(One of whom is a man, beside),
To sign and seal our cannons dumb?

IV

No, not Napoleon!—he who mused
At Paris, and at Milan spake,
And at Solferino led the fight:
Not he we trusted, honoured, used
Our hopes and hearts for . . . till they break
Even so, you tell us . . . in his sight.

V

Peace, peace, is still your word?
We say you lie then!—that is plain.
There is no peace, and shall be none.
Our very Dead would cry "Absurd!"
And clamour that they died in vain,
And whine to come back to the sun.

VI

Hush! more reverence for the Dead!
They've done the most for Italy
Evermore since the earth was fair.
Now would that we had died instead,
Still dreaming peace meant liberty,
And did not, could not, mean despair.

VII

Peace, you say?—yes, peace, in truth!
But such a peace as the ear can achieve
'Twixt the rifle's click and the rush of the ball,
'Twixt the tiger's spring and the crunch of the tooth,
'Twixt the dying atheist's negative
And God's Face—waiting, after all!

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,

Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:

"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

Robert Browning

Arcades Ambo

A. You blame me that I ran away?
Why, Sir, the enemy advanced:
Balls flew about, and—who can say
But one, if I stood firm, had glanced
In my direction? Cowardice?
I only know we don't live twice,
Therefore—shun death, is my advice.

B. Shun death at all risks? Well, at some!
True, I myself, Sir, though I scold
The cowardly, by no means come
Under reproof as overbold
—I, who would have no end of brutes
Cut up alive to guess what suits
My case and saves my toe from shoots.

Robert Browning

Peschiera

What voice did on my spirit fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost?
'*'*Tis better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all.'

The tricolor—a trampled rag
Lies, dirt and dust; the lines I track

By sentry boxes yellow-black,
Lead up to no Italian flag.

I see the Croat soldier stand
Upon the grass of your redoubts;
The eagle with his black wings flouts
The breath and beauty of your land.

Yet not in vain, although in vain,
O men of Brescia, on the day
Of loss past hope, I heard you say
Your welcome to the noble pain.

You say, 'Since so it is,—good-bye
Sweet life, high hope; but whatsoe'er
May be, or must, no tongue shall dare
To tell. "The Lombard feared to die!"

You said (there shall be answer fit)
'And if our children must obey,
They must; but thinking on this day
'Twill less debase them to submit.'

You said (Oh not in vain you said),
'Haste, brothers, haste, while yet we may;
The hours ebb fast of this one day
When blood may yet be nobly shed.'

Ah! not for idle hatred, not
For honour, fame, nor self-applause,
But for the glory of the cause,
You did, what will not be forgot.

And though the stranger stand, 'tis true,
By force and fortune's rights he stands;
By fortune which is in God's hands,
And strength, which yet shall spring in you.

This voice did on my spirit fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost,
'"'Tis better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all.'

Arthur Hugh Clough

WHEN THERE IS PEACE

"When there is Peace, this land no more
Will be the land we know of yore."
Thus do the facile seers foretell
The truth that none can buy or sell
And e'en the wisest must ignore.

When we have bled at every pore,
Shall we still strive for gear and store?
Will it be Heaven, will it be Hell,
When there is Peace?

This let us pray for—this implore—
That, all base dreams thrust out at door,
We may in nobler aims excel,
And, like men waking from a spell,
Grow stronger, worthier than before,
When there is Peace!

Austin Dobson

From FOR ENGLAND'S SAKE

II

The Man in the Street

'Death in the right cause, death in the wrong cause,
trumpets of victory, groans of defeat':
Yes: and it's better to go for the Abbey than chuck your
old bones out in the street.

Life is a march and a battle (there's some of us make it
a kind of review);
But how if you never get out on parade, and there's not
any fighting to do?

Hands in your pockets, eyes on the pavement, where in
the world is the fun of it all?
But a row—but a rush—but a face for your fist.
Then a crash through the dark—and a fall;

And they carry you—where? Does it matter a straw?
You can look at them out of your pride;
For you've had your will of a new front door, and your
foot on the mat inside.

In fact, you've done a pitch for yourself, and it seems,
but it isn't, a parcel of stuff,
For nobody knows, nor looks your way, nor cares—
but you know, and that's enough.

'Death in the wrong cause, death in the right'; O,
it's plain as a last year's comic song!
For the thing is, give us a cause, and we'll risk
our skins for it, cheerfully, right or wrong.

And if, please God, it's the Rag of Rags, that sends us
roaring into the fight,
O, we'll go in a glory, dead certain sure that we're utterly
bound to be right!

William E. Henley

SEPTEMBER 21, 1870

Speak low, speak little: who may sing
While yonder cannon-thunders boom?
Watch, shuddering, what each day may bring:
Nor 'pipe amid the crack of doom.'

And yet—the pines sing overhead,
The robins by the alder-pool,
The bees about the garden-bed,
The children dancing home from school.

And ever at the loom of Birth
The mighty Mother weaves and sings:
She weaves—fresh robes for mangled earth;
She sings—fresh hopes for desperate things.

And thou, too: if through Nature's calm
Some strain of music touch thine ears,
Accept and share that soothing balm,
And sing, though choked with pitying tears.

Charles Kingsley

A MARCH

Dreary East winds howling o'er us;
Clay-lands knee-deep spread before us;
Mire and ice and snow and sleet;
Aching backs and frozen feet;
Knees which reel as marches quicken,
Ranks which thin as corpses thicken;
While with carrion birds we eat,
Calling puddle-water sweet,
As we pledge the health of our general, who fares as rough as we:
What can daunt us, what can turn us, led to death by such as he?

Charles Kingsley

THE MARCH OF THE WORKERS

What is this—the sound and rumor? What is this that all men hear,
Like the wind in hollow valleys when the storm is drawing near,
Like the rolling-on of ocean in the eventide of fear?
'Tis the people marching on.

Chorus

Hark the rolling of the thunder!
Lo! the sun! and lo! thereunder
Riseth wrath, and hope, and wonder,
And the host comes marching on.

Forth they come from grief and torment; on they go
towards health and mirth.
All the wide world is their dwelling, every corner of
the earth.
Buy them, sell them for thy service! Try the bargain
what 'tis worth,
For the days are marching on. (*Chorus*)

Many a hundred years passed over have they labored
deaf and blind;
Never tidings reached their sorrow, never hope their toil
might find.
Now at last they've heard and hear it, and the cry comes
down the wind
And their feet are marching on. (*Chorus*)

"Is it war then? Will ye perish as the dry wood in the
fire?
Is it peace? Then be ye of us, let your hope be our
desire.
Come and live! for life awaketh, and the world shall
never tire;
And hope is marching on. (*Chorus*)

William Morris

From THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

CANTO I—ACCEPTED PRELUDES

I

The Song of Songs

The pulse of War, whose bloody heats
Sane purposes insanely work,

Now with fraternal frenzy beats,
  And binds the Christian to the Turk,
And shrieking fifes and braggart flags,
  Through quiet England, teach our breath
The courage corporate that drags
  The coward to heroic death.
Too late for song! Who henceforth sings,
  Must fledge his heavenly flight with more
Song-worthy and heroic things
  Than hasty, home-destroying war.
While might and right are not agreed,
  And battle thus is yet to wage,
So long let laurels be the meed
  Of soldier as of poet sage;
But men expect the Tale of Love,
  And weary of the Tale of Hate;
Lift me, O Muse, myself above,
  And let the world no longer wait!

Coventry Patmore

THE GERMAN-FRENCH CAMPAIGN

1870-71

I

Thy Brother's Blood Crieth

All her corn-fields rippled in the sunshine,
  All her lovely vines, sweets-laden, bowed;
Yet some weeks to harvest and to vintage:
  When, as one man's hand, a cloud

Rose and spread, and, blackening, burst asunder
In rain and fire and thunder.

Is there nought to reap in the day of harvest?
Hath the vine in her day no fruit to yield?
Yea, men tread the press, but nor for sweetness,
And they reap a red crop from the field.
Build barns, ye reapers, garner all aright,
Though your souls be called to-night.

A cry of tears goes up from blackened homesteads,
A cry of blood goes up from reeking earth:
Tears and blood have a cry that pierces Heaven
Through all its Hallelujah swells of mirth;
God hears their cry, and though He tarry, yet
He doth not forget.

Mournful Mother, prone in dust and weeping,
Who shall comfort thee for those who are not?
As thou didst, men do to thee; and heap the measure
And heat the furnace sevenfold hot:
As thou once, now these to thee—who pitieth thee
From sea to sea?

O thou King, terrible in strength, and building
Thy strong future on thy past!
Though he drink the last, the King of Sheshach,
Yet he shall drink at the last.
Art thou greater than great Babylon,
Which lies overthrown?

Take heed, ye unwise among the people;
O ye fools, when will ye understand?—
He that planted the ear shall He not hear,
Nor He smite who formed the hand?
'Vengeance is Mine, is Mine,' thus saith the Lord:
O Man put up thy sword.

Christina G. Rossetti

NICCOLO DEGLI ALBIZZI

Prolonged Sonnet

When the Troops were returning from Milan

If you could see, fair brother, how dead beat
The fellows look who come through Rome to-day,—
Black yellow smoke dried visages,—you'd say
They thought their haste at going all too fleet.
Their empty victual-waggons up the street
Over the bridge dreadfully sound and sway;
Their eyes, as hanged men's, turning the wrong way;
And nothing on their backs, or heads, or feet.
One sees the ribs and all the skeletons
Of their gaunt horses; and a sorry sight
Are the torn saddles, crammed with straw and stones.
They are ashamed, and march throughout the night;
Stumbling, for hunger, on their marrow-bones;
Like barrels rolling, jolting, in this plight.
Their arms all gone, not even their swords are saved;
And each as silent as a man being shaved.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

From TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY

The County of the Camisards

We travelled in the print of olden wars,
  Yet all the land was green,
  And love we found, and peace,
  Where fire and war had been.

They pass and smile, the children of the sword—
  No more the sword they wield;
  And O, how deep the corn
  Along the battlefield!

Robert Louis Stevenson

A WATCH IN THE NIGHT

1.

Watchman, what of the night?—
  Storm and thunder and rain,
  Lights that waver and wane,
Leaving the watchfires unlit.
Only the balefires are bright,
  And the flash of the lamps now and then
From a palace where spoilers sit,
  Trampling the children of men.

* * * * * * * *

3.

Mourners, what of the night?—
  All night through without sleep

We weep, and we weep, and we weep.
Who shall give us our sons?
Beaks of raven and kite,
Mouths of wolf and of hound,
Give us them back whom the guns
Shot for your dead on the ground.

4.

Dead men, what of the night?—
Cannon and scaffold and sword,
Horror of gibbet and cord,
Mowed us as sheaves for the grave,
Mowed us down for the right.
We do not grudge or repent.
Freely to freedom we gave
Pledges, till life should be spent.

5.

Statesman, what of the night?—
The night will last me my time.
The gold on a crown or a crime
Looks well enough yet by the lamps.
Have we not fingers to write,
Lips to swear at a need?
Then, when danger decamps,
Bury the word with the deed.

6.

Warrior, what of the night?—
Whether it be not or be

Night, is as one thing to me.
I for one, at the least
Ask not of dews if they blight,
Ask not of flames if they slay,
Ask not of prince or of priest
How long ere we put them away.

9.

Captives, what of the night?—
It rains outside overhead
Always, a rain that is red,
And our faces are soiled with the rain
Here in the seasons' despite
Day-time and night-time are one,
Till the curse of the kings and the chain
Break, and their toils be undone.

13.

Martyrs, what of the night?—
Nay, is it night with you yet?
We, for our part, we forget
What night was, if it were.
The loud red mouth of the fight
Are silent and shut where we are.
In our eyes the tempestuous air
Shines as the face of a star.

19.

Liberty, what of the night?—
I feel not the red rains fall,

Hear not the tempest at all,
Nor thunder in heaven any more.
All the distance is white
With the soundless feet of the sun.
Night, with the woes that it wore,
Night is over and done.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

From LOCKSLEY HALL

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be:

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nation's airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GROUP VIII

SPIRITUAL RELATIONS

SUB-GROUP A

YOUTH

YOUTH AND CALM

'Tis death! and peace, indeed, is here,
And ease from shame, and rest from fear.
There's nothing can dismarble now
The smoothness of that limpid brow.
But is a calm like this, in truth,
The crowning end of life and youth,
And when this boon rewards the dead,
Are all debts paid, has all been said?
And is the heart of youth so light,
Its step so firm, its eye so bright,
Because on its hot brow there blows
A wind of promise and repose
From the far grave, to which it goes;
Because it hath the hope to come,
One day, to harbour in the tomb?
Ah no, the bliss youth dreams is one
For daylight, for the cheerful sun,
For feeling nerves and living breath—
Youth dreams a bliss on this side death.
It dreams a rest, if not more deep,
More grateful than this marble sleep;
It hears a voice within it tell:
Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well.
'Tis all perhaps which man acquires,
But 'tis not what our youth desires.

Matthew Arnold

THE ELDER'S REBUKE

'LISTEN! When your hair, like mine
Takes a tint of silver gray;
When your eyes, with dimmer shine,
Watch life's bubbles float away:

'When you, young man, have borne like me
The weary weight of sixty-three,
Then shall penance sore be paid
For those hours so wildly squandered;
And the words that now fall dead
On your ear, be deeply pondered—
Pondered and approved at last:
But their virtue will be past!

'Glorious is the prize of Duty,
Though she be "a serious power";
Treacherous all the lures of Beauty,
Thorny bud and poisonous flower!

'Mirth is but a mad beguiling
Of the golden-gifted time;
Love—a demon meteor, wiling
Heedless feet to gulfs of crime.

'Those who follow earthly pleasure,
Heavenly knowledge will not lead;
Wisdom hides from them her treasure,
Virtue bids them evil-speed;

'Vainly may their hearts repenting,
Seek for aid in future years;
Wisdom, scorned, knows no relenting;
Virtue is not won by fears.'

Thus spake the ice-blooded elder gray;
The young man scoffed as he turned away,
Turned to the call of a sweet lute's measure,
Waked by the lightsome touch of pleasure:
Had he ne'er met a gentler teacher,
Woe had been wrought by that pitiless preacher.

Emily Brontë

From TRANSLATIONS FROM HEINE

III

I

My child, we were two children,
Small, merry by childhood's law;
We used to crawl to the hen-house
And hide ourselves in the straw.

II

We crowed like cocks, and whenever
The passers near us drew—
Cock-a-doodle! they thought
'Twas a real cock that crew.

III

The boxes about our courtyard
We carpeted to our mind,

And lived there both together—
Kept house in a noble kind.

IV

The neighbour's old cat often
Came to pay us a visit;
We made her a bow and curtsey,
Each with a compliment in it.

V

After her health we asked,
Our care and regard to evince—
(We have made the very same speeches
To many an old cat since).

VI

We also sat and wisely
Discoursed, as old folks do,
Complaining how all went better
In those good times we knew,—

VII

How love and truth and believing
Had left the world to itself,
And how so dear was the coffee,
And how so rare was the pelf.

VIII

The children's games are over,
The rest is over with youth—
The world, the good games, the good times,
The belief, and the love, and the truth.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

YOUTH AND ART

It once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted and polished,
Then laughed "They will see some day
Smith made, and Gibson demolished."

My business was song, song, song;
I chirped, cheeped, trilled and twittered,
"Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,
And Grisi's existence embittered!"

I earned no more by a warble
Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I—soon managed to find
  Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
  And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault
  If you never turned your eye's tail up
As I shook upon E in alt.,
  Or ran the chromatic scale up:

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
  And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
  With bulrush and watercresses.

Why did not you pinch a flower
  In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
  Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

I did look, sharp as a lynx,
  (And yet the memory rankles,)
When models arrived, some minx
  Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles.

But I think I gave you as good!
  "That foreign fellow,—who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
  For his tuning her that piano?"

Could you say so, and never say,
  "Suppose we join hands and fortunes,

And I fetch her from over the way,
Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes"?

No, no: you would not be rash
Nor I rasher and something over:
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
I'm queen myself at bals-paré,
I've married a rich old lord,
And you're dubbed knight and an R.A.

Each life unfulfilled, you see;
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
Starved, feasted, despaired,—been happy.

And nobody calls you a dunce,
And people suppose me clever:
This could but have happened once,
And we missed it, lost it forever.

Robert Browning

From EARLY POEMS

V

How often sit I, poring o'er
My strange distorted youth,
Seeking in vain, in all my store,
One feeling based on truth;
Amid the maze of petty life

A clue whereby to move,
A spot whereon in toil and strife
To dare to rest and love.
So constant as my heart would be,
So fickle as it must,
'Twere well for others as for me
'Twere dry as summer dust.
Excitements come, and act and speech
Flow freely forth;—but no,
Nor they, nor ought beside can reach
The buried world below.

VI

—Like a child
In some strange garden left awhile alone,
I pace about the pathways of the world,
Plucking light hopes and joys from every stem,
With qualms of vague misgiving in my heart
That payment at the last will be required,
Payment I cannot make, or guilt incurred,
And shame to be endured.

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE LOST ELIXIR

"One drop of ruddy human blood puts more life into the veins of a poem than all the delusive 'aurum potabile' that can be distilled out of the choicest library."—LOWELL

Ah yes, that "drop of human blood!"—
We had it once, may be,

When your young song's impetuous flood
  First poured its ecstasy;
But now the shrunk poetic vein
Yields not that priceless drop again.

We toil,—as toiled we not of old;
  Our patient hands distil
The shining spheres of chemic gold
  With hard-won, fruitless skill;
But that red drop still seems to be
Beyond our utmost alchemy.

Perchance, but most in later age,
  Time's after-gift, a tear,
Will strike a pathos on the page
  Beyond all art sincere;
But that "one drop of human blood"
Has gone with life's first leaf and bud.

Austin Dobson

ECHOES XXXVIII

ON THE WAY TO KEW

On the way to Kew,
By the river old and grey,
Where in the Long Ago
We laughed and loitered so,
I met a ghost to-day,
A ghost that told of you—
A ghost of low replies

And sweet inscrutable eyes,
Coming up from Richmond
As you used to do.

By the river old and grey,
The enchanted Long Ago
Murmured and smiled anew.
On the way to Kew,
March had the laugh of May,
The bare boughs looked aglow,
And old, immortal words
Sang in my breast like birds,
Coming up from Richmond
As I used with you.

With the life of Long Ago
Lived my thought of you.
By the river old and grey
Flowing his appointed way
As I watched I knew
What is so good to know—
Not in vain, not in vain,
Shall I look for you again,
Coming up from Richmond
On the way to Kew.

William E. Henley

To G.

A hasty jest I once let fall—
As jests are wont to be, untrue—

As if the sum of joy to you
Were hunt and picnic, rout and ball.

Your eyes met mine: I did not blame;
You saw it: but I touched too near
Some noble nerve; a silent tear
Spoke soft reproach, and lofty shame.

I do not wish those words unsaid.
Unspoilt by praise and pleasure, you
In that one look to woman grew,
While with a child, I thought, I played.

Next to mine own beloved so long!
I have not spent my heart in vain.
I watched the blade; I see the grain;
A woman's soul, most soft, yet strong.

Charles Kingsley

OLD LOVE

'You must be very old, Sir Giles,'
I said; he said: 'Yea, very old:'
Whereat the mournfullest of smiles
Creased his dry skin with many a fold.

'They hammer'd out my basnet point
Into a round salade,' he said,
'The basnet being quite out of joint,
Natheless the salade rasps my head.'

He gazed at the great fire awhile:
'And you are getting old, Sir John;'
(He said this with that cunning smile
That was most sad;) 'we both wear on,

'Knights come to court and look at me,
With eyebrows up, except my lord,
And my dear lady, none I see
That know the ways of my old sword.'

(My lady! at that word no pang
Stopp'd all my blood.) 'But tell me, John,
Is it quite true that pagans hang
So thick about the east that on

'The eastern sea no Venice flag
Can fly unpaid for?' 'True,' I said,
'And in such way the miscreants drag
Christ's cross upon the ground, I dread

'That Constantine must fall this year.'
Within my heart; 'These things are small;
This is not small, that things outwear
I thought were made for ever, yea, all,

'All things go soon or late;' I said—
I saw the duke in court next day;
Just as before, his grand great head
Above his gold robes dreaming lay,

Only his face was paler; there
I saw his duchess sit by him;

And she—she was changed more; her hair
Before my eyes that used to swim,

And make me dizzy with great bliss
Once, when I used to watch her sit—
Her hair is bright still, yet it is
As though some dust were thrown on it.

Her eyes are shallower, as though
Some grey glass were behind; her brow
And cheeks the straining bones show through,
Are not so good for kissing now.

Her lips are drier now she is
A great duke's wife these many years,
They will not shudder with a kiss
As once they did, being moist with tears.

Also her hands have lost that way
Of clinging that they used to have;
They look'd quite easy, as they lay
Upon the silken cushions brave

With broidery of the apples green
My lord Duke bears upon his shield.
Her face, alas! that I have seen
Look fresher than an April field.

This is all gone now; gone also
Her tender walking; when she walks

She is most queenly I well know,
And she is fair still:—as the stalks

Of faded summer-lilies are,
So is she grown now unto me
This spring-time, when the flowers star
The meadows, birds sing wonderfully.

I warrant once she used to cling
About his neck, and kiss'd him so,
And then his coming step would ring
Joy-bells for her,—some time ago.

Ah! sometimes like an idle dream
That hinders true life overmuch,
Sometimes like a lost heaven, these seem.—
This love is not so hard to smutch.

William Morris

THE GIRL OF ALL PERIODS

An Idyll

22

'And even our women,' lastly grumbles Ben,
'Leaving their nature, dress and talk like men!'
A damsel, as our train stops at Five Ashes,
Down to the station in a dog-cart dashes.
A footman buys her ticket, 'Third class, parly;'
And, in a huge-button'd coat and 'Champagne Charley'
And such scant manhood else as use allows her,
Her two shy knees bound in a single trouser,

With, 'twixt her shapely lips, a violet
Perch'd as a proxy for a cigarette,
She takes her window in our smoking carriage,
And scans us, calmly scorning men and marriage.
Ben frowns in silence; older, I know better
Than to read ladies' 'haviour in the letter.
This aping man is crafty Love's devising
To make the woman's difference more surprising;
And, as for feeling wroth at such rebelling,
Who'd scold the child for now and then repelling
Lures with 'I won't,' or for a moment's straying
In its sure growth towards more full obeying?
'Yes, she had read the "Legend of the Ages,"
'And George Sand too, skipping the wicked pages.'
And, whilst we talk'd, her protest firm and perky
Against mankind, I thought, grew lax and jerky;
And, at a compliment, her mouth's compressure
Nipt in its birth a little laugh of pleasure;
And smiles, forbidden her lips, as weakness horrid,
Broke, in grave lights, from eyes and chin and forehead;
And, as I push'd kind 'vantage 'gainst the scorner,
The two shy knees press'd shier to the corner;
And Ben began to talk with her, the rather
Because he found out that he knew her father,
Sir Francis Applegarth, of Fenny Compton,
And danced once with her sister Maude at Brompton;
And then he stared until he quite confused her,
More pleased with her than I, who but excused her;
And, when she got out, he, with sheepish glances,
Said he'd stop too, and call on old Sir Francis.

Coventry Patmore

DREAM-LOVE

Young Love lies sleeping
  In May-time of the year,
Among the lilies,
  Lapped in the tender light:
White lambs come grazing,
  White doves come building there;
And round about him
  The May-bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow
  For oh a softer cheek;
Broad leaves cast shadow
  Upon the heavy eyes:
There winds and waters
  Grow lulled and scarcely speak;
There twilight lingers
  The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming;
  But who shall tell the dream?
A perfect sunlight
  On rustling forest tips;
Or perfect moonlight
  Upon a rippling stream
Or perfect silence,
  Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odours round him
  To fill the drowsy air;

Weave silent dances
  Around him to and fro;
For oh in waking
  The sights are not so fair,
And song and silence
  Are not like these below.

Young Love lies dreaming
  Till summerdays are gone,—
Dreaming and drowsing
  Away to perfect sleep:
He sees the beauty
  Sun hath not looked upon,
And tastes the fountain
  Unutterably deep.

Him perfect music
  Doth hush unto his rest,
And through the pauses
  The perfect silence calms:
Oh poor the voices
  Of earth from east to west,
And poor earth's stillness
  Between her stately palms!

Young Love lies drowsing
  Away to poppied death;
Cool shadows deepen
  Across the sleeping face:
So fails the summer
  With warm delicious breath;

And what hath autumn
To give us in its place?

Draw close the curtains
Of branched evergreen;
Change cannot touch them
With fading fingers sere:
Here the first violets
Perhaps will bud unseen,
And a dove, may be,
Return to nestle here.

Christina G. Rossetti

From FRANCO SACCHETTI

III

Catch—On a Wet Day

As I walk'd thinking through a little grove,
Some girls that gathered flowers came passing me,
Saying, 'Look here! look there!' delightedly.
'Oh, here it is!' 'What's that?' 'A lily, love.'
'And there are violets!'
'Further for roses! Oh, the lovely pets—
The darling beauties! Oh, the nasty thorn!
Look here, my hand's all torn!'
'What's that that jumps!' 'Oh, don't! it's a grasshopper!'
'Come run, come run,
Here's bluebells!' 'Oh, what fun!'
'Not that way! Stop her!'

'Yes, this way!' 'Pluck them, then!'
'Oh, I've found mushrooms! Oh, look there!' 'Oh, I'm
Quite sure that further on we'll get wild thyme.'

'Oh, we shall stay too long, it's going to rain!
There's lightning, oh there's thunder!'
'Oh, shan't we hear the vesper bell, I wonder?'
'Why, it's not nones, you silly little thing;
And don't you hear the nightingales that sing
FLY AWAY O DIE AWAY?'
'Oh, I hear something! Hush!'
'Why, where? what is it, then?' 'Ah! in that bush!'
So every girl here knocks it, shakes and shocks it,
Till with the stir they make
Out skurries a great snake.
'O Lord! O me! Alack! Ah me! alack!'
They scream, and then all run and scream again,
And then in heavy drops down comes the rain.

Each running at the other in a fright,
Each trying to get before the other, and crying,
And flying, stumbling, tumbling, wrong or right;
One sets her knee
There where her foot should be;
One has her hands and dress
All smothered up with mud in a fine mess;
And one gets trampled on by two or three.
What's gathered is let fall
About the wood and not picked up at all.
The wreaths of flowers are scattered on the ground;
And still as screaming hustling without rest

They run this way and that and round and round,
She thinks herself in luck who runs the best.
I stood quite still to have a perfect view,
And never noticed till I got wet through.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

SONGS OF TRAVEL

XLIV

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
  Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
  Over the sea to Skye.

Mull was astern, Rum on the port,
  Egg on the starboard bow;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul:
  Where is that glory now?

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
  Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
  Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,
  Give me the sun that shone!
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,
  Give me the lad that's gone!

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Billow and breeze, islands and seas,
Mountains of rain and sun,
All that was good, all that was fair,
All that was me is gone.

Robert Louis Stevenson

HOPE AND FEAR

Beneath the shadow of dawn's aerial cope,
With eyes enkindled as the sun's own sphere,
Hope from the front of youth in godlike cheer
Looks Godward, past the shades where blind men grope
Round the dark door that prayers nor dreams can ope,
And makes for joy the very darkness dear
That gives her wide wings play; nor dreams that fear
At noon may rise and pierce the heart of hope.
Then, when the soul leaves off to dream and yearn,
May truth first purge her eyesight to discern
What once being known leaves time no power to appall;
Till youth at last, ere yet youth be not, learn
The kind wise word that falls from years that fall—
"Hope not thou much, and fear thou not at all."

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE SAILOR BOY

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,

And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP B

OLD AGE

GROWING OLD

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forgo her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone.

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

Yes, this, and more; but not
Ah, 'tis not what in youth we dream'd 'twould be!
'Tis not to have our life
Mellow'd and soften'd as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline.

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirr'd:
And weep, and feel the fulness of the past,
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;

It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none.

It is—last stage of all—
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man.

Matthew Arnold

ANTICIPATION

How beautiful the earth is still,
  To thee—how full of happiness!
How little fraught with real ill,
  Or unreal phantoms of distress!
How spring can bring thee glory, yet,
And summer win thee to forget
  December's sullen time!
Why dost thou hold the treasure fast,
Of youth's delight, when youth is past,
  And thou art near thy prime?

When those who were thy own compeers
Equals in fortune and in years,

Have seen their morning melt in tears,
To clouded, smileless day;
Blest, had they died untried and young,
Before their hearts went wandering wrong,—
Poor slaves, subdued by passions strong,
A weak and helpless prey!

'Because I hoped while they enjoyed,
And by fulfilment, hope destroyed;
As children hope, with trustful breast,
I waited bliss—and cherished rest.
A thoughtful spirit taught me soon,
That we must long till life be done;
That every phase of earthly joy
Must always fade, and always cloy:

'This I foresaw, and would not chase
The fleeting treacheries;
But, with firm foot and tranquil face,
Held backward from that tempting race,
Gazed o'er the sands the waves efface,
To the enduring seas—
There cast my anchor of desire
Deep in unknown eternity;
Nor ever let my spirit tire,
With looking for what is to be!

'It is hope's spell that glorifies,
Like youth, to my maturer eyes,
All nature's million mysteries,
The fearful and the fair—

Hope soothes me in the griefs I know;
She lulls my pain for others' woe,
And makes me strong to undergo
What I am born to bear.

'Glad comforter! will I not brave,
Unawed, the darkness of the grave?
Nay, smile to hear Death's billows rave—
Sustained, my guide, by thee?
The more unjust seems present fate,
The more my spirit swells elate,
Strong, in thy strength, to anticipate
Rewarding destiny!

Emily Brontë

THE PROSPECT

Methinks we do as fretful children do,
Leaning their faces on the window-pane
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's stain,
And shut the sky and landscape from their view;
And thus, alas, since God the maker drew
A mystic separation 'twixt those twain,—
The life beyond us, and our souls in pain,—
We miss the prospect which we are called unto
By grief we are fools to use. Be still and strong,
O man, my brother! Hold thy sobbing breath,
And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong!
That so, as life's appointment issueth,
Thy vision may be clear to watch along
The sunset consummation-lights of death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

From RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,

Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

Robert Browning

LIFE IS STRUGGLE

To wear out heart, and nerves, and brain,
And give one self a world of pain;
Be eager, angry, fierce, and hot,
Imperious, supple—God knows what,
For what's all one to have or not;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
For 'tis not joy, it is not gain,
It is not in itself a bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us all alive.

To say we truly feel the pain,
And quite are sinking with the strain;—
Entirely, simply, undeceived,
Believe, and say we ne'er believed
The object, e'en were it achieved,
A thing we e'er had cared to keep;
With heart and soul to hold it cheap,
And then to go and try it again;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
O, 'tis not joy, and 'tis not bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us still alive.

Arthur Hugh Clough

GROWING GRAY

"On a l'age de son coeur."

A. D'HOUDETOT

A little more toward the light;—
Me miserable! Here's one that's white;
And one that's turning;
Adieu to song and "salad days;"
My Muse, let's go at once to Jay's,
And order mourning.

We must reform our rhymes, my Dear,—
Renounce the gay for the severe,—
Be grave, not witty;
We have, no more, the right to find
That Pyrrha's hair is neatly twined,—
That Chloe's pretty.

Young Love's for us a farce that's played:
Light canzonet and serenade
No more may tempt us;
Gray hairs but ill accord with dreams;
From aught but sour didactic themes
Our years exempt us.

Indeed! you really fancy so?
You think for one white streak we grow
At once satiric?
A fiddlestick! Each hair's a string
To which our ancient Muse shall sing
A younger lyric.

The heart's still sound. Shall "cakes and ale"
Grow rare to youth because we rail
At schoolboy dishes?
Perish the thought! 'Tis ours to chant
When neither Time nor Tide can grant
Belief with wishes.

Austin Dobson

BALLADE OF YOUTH AND AGE

I.M.

Thomas Edward Brown (*1829-1896*)

Spring at her height on a morn at prime,
Sails that laugh from a flying squall,
Pomp of harmony, rapture of rhyme—

Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
Winter sunsets and leaves that fall,
An empty flagon, a folded page,
A tumble-down wheel, a tattered ball—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Bells that clash in a gaudy chime,
Swords that clatter in onsets tall,
The words that ring and the fames that climb—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
Hymnals old in a dusty stall,
A bald, blind bird in a crazy cage,
The scene of a faded festival—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Hours that strut as the heirs of time,
Deeds whose rumour's clarion-call,
Songs where the singers their souls sublime—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
A staff that rests in a nook of wall,
A reeling battle, a rusted gage,
The chant of a nearing funeral—
These are a type of the world of Age.

ENVOY

Struggle and turmoil, revel and brawl—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
A smouldering hearth and a silent stage—
These are a type of the world of Age.

William E. Henley

YOUNG AND OLD

When all the world is young, lad, and everything is green,
And every goose a swan, lad, and every lass a queen,
Then boot, lad, and horse, lad, and round the world away,
And go it while you're young, lad;—each dog must have his day.

When all the world gets old, lad, and all the trees turn brown,
And all the jests get stale, lad, and all the wheels run down,
Then hie back to thy home, lad,—the maimed and sick among:
Thank God! if then you find one face you loved when you were young.

Charles Kingsley

REMEMBERED GRACE

Since succour to the feeblest of the wise
Is charge of nobler weight
Than the security
Of many and many a foolish soul's estate,
This I affirm,
Though fools will fools more confidently be:
Whom God does once with heart to heart befriend,
He does so till the end:
And having planted life's miraculous germ,

One sweet pulsation of responsive love,
He sets him sheer above,
Not sin and bitter shame
And wreck of fame,
But Hell's insidious and more black attempt,
The envy, malice, and pride,
Which men who share so easily condone
That few ev'n list such ills as these to hide.
From these unalterably exempt,
Through the remember'd grace
Of that divine embrace,
Of his sad errors none,
Though gross to blame,
Shall cast him lower than the cleansing flame,
Nor make him quite depart
From the small flock named 'after God's own heart,'
And to themselves unknown.
Nor can he quail
In faith, nor flush nor pale
When all the other idiot people spell
How this or that new Prophet's word belies
Their last high oracle;
But constantly his soul
Points to its pole
Ev'n as the needle points, and knows not why;
And, under the ever-changing clouds of doubt,
When others cry,
'The stars, if stars there were,
Are quench'd and out!'
To him, uplooking t'ward the hills for aid,
Appear, at need display'd,

Gaps in the low-hung gloom, and, bright in air,
Orion or the Bear.

Coventry Patmore

IF ONLY

If only I might love my God and die!—
  But now He bids me love Him and live on,
  Now when the bloom of all my life is gone,
The pleasant half of life has quite gone by.
My tree of hope is lopt that spread so high;
  And I forget how summer glowed and shone,
  While autumn grips me with its fingers wan,
And frets me with its fitful windy sigh.
When autumn passes then must winter numb,
  And winter may not pass a weary while.
  But when it passes spring shall flower again:
And in that spring who weepeth now shall smile—
  Yea, they shall wax who now are on the wane
Yea, they shall sing for love when Christ shall come.

Christina G. Rossetti

THREE SEASONS

'A cup for hope!' she said,
In springtime ere the bloom was old;
The crimson wine was poor and cold
  By her mouth's richer red.

'A cup for love!' how low,
How soft the words; and all the while

Her blush was rippling with a smile
Like summer after snow.

'A cup for memory!'
Cold cup that one must drain alone:
While autumn winds are up and moan
Across the barren sea.

Hope, memory, love:
Hope for fair morn, and love for day,
And memory for the evening grey
And solitary dove.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

THE HILL SUMMIT

This feast-day of the sun, his altar there
In the broad west has blazed for vesper-song;
And I have loitered in the vale too long
And gaze now a belated worshipper.
Yet may I not forget that I was 'ware,
So journeying, of his face at intervals
Transfigured where the fringed horizon falls,—
A fiery bush with coruscating hair.

And now that I have climbed and won this height,
I must tread downward through the sloping shade
And travel the bewildered tracks till night.
Yet for this hour I still may here be stayed

And see the gold air and the silver fade
And the last bird fly into the last light.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

TO WILL H. LOW

Youth now flees on feathered foot,
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,
Rarer songs of gods; and still
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream,
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits, but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
None can choose to stay at home,
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free,
Takes the sun and breaks the blue;—
Late with stooping pinion flew
Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set
Shining foot on temple roof:
Now again she flies aloof,
Coasting mountain clouds and kiss't
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane,
Still we pant and pound in vain;
Still with leaden foot we chase

Waning pinion, fainting face;
Still with grey hair we stumble on,
Till, behold, the vision gone!
Where hath fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead.
Life is over, life was gay:
We have come the primrose way.

Robert Louis Stevenson

FIRST AND LAST

Upon the borderlands of being,
Where life draws hardly breath
Between the lights and shadows fleeing
Fast as a word one saith,
Two flowers rejoice our eyesight, seeing
The dawns of birth and death.

Behind the babe his dawn is lying
Half risen with notes of mirth
From all the winds about it flying
Through new-born heaven and earth.
Before bright age his day for dying
Dawns equal-eyed with birth.

Equal the dews of even and dawn,
Equal the sun's eye seen
A hand's breadth risen and half withdrawn
But no bright hour between
Brings aught so bright by stream or lawn
To noonday growths of green.

Which flower of life may smell the sweeter
To love's insensual sense,
Which fragrance move with offering meeter
His soothed omnipotence,
Being chosen as fairer or as fleeter,
Borne hither or borne hence.

Love's foiled omniscience knows not: this
Where more than all he knows
With all his lore of bale and bliss,
The choice of rose and rose,
One red as lips that touch with his,
One white as moonlit snows.

No hope is half so sweet and good
No dream of saint or sage
So fair as these are: no dark mood
But these might best assuage;
The sweet red rose of babyhood,
The white sweet rose of age.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

To E. FITZGERALD

Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange,
Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
And watch your doves about you flit,

And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers;
Who live on milk and meal and grass;
And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras,
And seem'd at first "a thing enskied"
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light
To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual height
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again.
One night when earth was winter black,
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;
And on me, half-asleep, came back
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,
And set me climbing icy capes
And glaciers, over which there roll'd
To meet the long-arm'd vines with grapes
Of Eschol hugeness; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me, wrought.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

Rose, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in your May,
Two words, "My Rose" set all your face aglow,
And now that I am white, and you are gray,

That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,
Blooms in the Past, but close to me to-day
As this red rose, which on our terrace here
Glows in the blue of fifty miles away.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP C

WRITTEN IN LATER YEARS

From WESTMINSTER ABBEY

And truly he who here
Hath run his bright career,
And served men nobly, and acceptance found,
And borne to light and right his witness high,
What could he better wish than then to die,
And wait the issue, sleeping underground?
Why should he pray to range
Down the long age of truth that ripens slow;
And break his heart with all the baffling change,
And all the tedious tossing to and fro?

Matthew Arnold

LAST LINES

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;

Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

Emily Brontë

(These are the last lines Emily Brontë wrote)

From CASA GUIDI WINDOWS

Howe'er the uneasy world is vexed and wroth,
Young children, lifted high on parent souls,
Look round them with a smile upon the mouth,
And take for music every bell that tolls;

(Who said we should be better if like these?)
But we sit murmuring for the future though
Posterity is smiling on our knees,
Convicting us of folly. Let us go—
We will trust God. The blank interstices
Men take for ruins, He will build into
With pillared marbles rare, or knit across
With generous arches, till the fane's complete.
This world has no perdition, if some loss.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

DUBIETY

I will be happy if but for once:
Only help me, Autumn weather,
Me and my cares to screen, ensconce
In luxury's sofa-lap of leather!

Sleep? Nay, comfort—with just a cloud
Suffusing day too clear and bright:
Eve's essence, the single drop allowed
To sully, like milk, Noon's water-white.

Let gauziness shade, not shroud,—adjust,
Dim and not deaden,—somehow sheathe
Aught sharp in the rough world's busy thrust,
If it reach me through dreaming's vapor-wreath.

Be life so, all things ever the same!
For, what has disarmed the world? Outside,

Quiet and peace: inside, nor blame
Nor want, nor wish whate'er betide.

What is it like that has happened before?
A dream? No dream, more real by much.
A vision? But fanciful days of yore
Brought many: mere musing seems not such.

Perhaps but a memory, after all!
—Of what came once when a woman leant
To feel for my brow where her kiss might fall
Truth ever, truth only the excellent!

Robert Browning

From PROLOGUE—ASOLANDO

"The Poet's age is sad: for why?
In youth, the natural world could show
No common object but his eye
At once involved with alien glow—
His own soul's iris-bow.

"And now a flower is just a flower:
Man, bird, beast are but beast, bird, man—
Simply themselves, uncinct by dower
Of dyes which, when life's day began,
Round each in glory ran."

Robert Browning

EPILOGUE—ASOLANDO

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,

Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

Robert Browning

SAY NOT, THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,

The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

Arthur Hugh Clough

ALTERAM PARTEM

Or shall I say, Vain word, false thought,
Since Prudence hath her martyrs too,
And Wisdom dictates not to do,
Till doing shall be not for nought.

Not ours to give or lose is life;
Will Nature, when her brave ones fall,
Remake her work? or songs recall
Death's victim slain in useless strife?

That rivers flow into the sea
Is loss and waste, the foolish say,
Nor know that back they find their way,
Unseen, to where they wont to be.

Showers fall upon the hills, springs flow,
The river runneth still at hand,
Brave men are born into the land,
And whence the foolish do not know.

No! no vain voice did on me fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost,
'Tis better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all.'

Arthur Hugh Clough

IN AFTER DAYS

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,

Saying—"He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

Austin Dobson

ECHOES—IV

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

William E. Henley

DRIFTING AWAY

A Fragment

They drift away. Ah God! they drift forever.
I watch the stream sweep onward to the sea,
Like some old battered buoy upon a roaring river,
Round whom the tide-waifs hang—then drift to sea.

I watch them drift—the old familiar faces,
Who fished and rode with me, by stream and wold,
Till ghosts, not men, fill old beloved places,
And, ah! the land is rank with churchyard mold.

I watch them drift—the youthful aspirations,
Shores, landmarks, beacons, drift alike.

. . . .

I watch them drift—the poets and the statesmen;
The very streams run upward from the sea.

. . . .

Yet overhead the boundless arch of heaven
Still fades to night, still blazes into day.

. . . .

Ah, God; My God! Thou wilt not drift away!

Charles Kingsley

RHYME SLAYETH SHAME

If as I come unto her she might hear,
If words might reach her when from her I go,
Then speech a little of my heart might show,

Because indeed nor joy nor grief nor fear
Silence my love; but her grey eyes and clear,
Truer than truth, pierce through my weal and woe;
The world fades with its words, and naught I know
But that my changed life to My Life is near.

Go, then, poor rhymes, who know my heart indeed,
And sing to her the words I cannot say,—
That Love has slain Time, and knows no to-day
And no to-morrow; tell her of my need,
And how I follow where her footsteps lead,
Until the veil of speech death draws away.

William Morris

MAY GROWN A-COLD

O certainly, no month this is but May!
Sweet earth and sky, sweet birds of happy song,
Do make thee happy now, and thou art strong,
And many a tear thy love shall wipe away
And make the dark night merrier than the day,
Straighten the crooked paths and right the wrong,
And tangle bliss so that it tarry long.
Go cry aloud the hope the Heavens do say!

Nay, what is this? and wherefore lingerest thou?
Why sayest thou the sky is hard as stone?
Why sayest thou the thrushes sob and moan?
Why sayest thou the east tears bloom and bough?
Why seem the sons of man so hopeless now?
Thy love is gone, poor wretch, thou art alone!

William Morris

SEMELE

No praise to me!
My joy 'twas to be nothing but the glass
Thro' which the general boon of Heaven should pass,
To focus upon thee.
Nor is't thy blame
Thou first should'st glow, and, after, fade i' the flame.
It takes more might
Than God has given thee, Dear, so long to feel delight.
Shall I, alas,
Reproach thee with thy change and my regret?
Blind fumblers that we be
About the portals of felicity!
The wind of words would scatter, tears would wash
Quite out the little heat
Beneath the silent and chill-seeming ash,
Perchance, still slumbering sweet.

Coventry Patmore

LIFE AND DEATH

Life is not sweet. One day it will be sweet
  To shut our eyes and die;
Nor feel the wild flowers blow, nor birds dart by
  With flitting butterfly,
Nor grass grow long above our heads and feet,
Nor hear the happy lark that soars sky-high,
Nor sigh that spring is fleet and summer fleet.
  Nor mark the waxing wheat,
Nor know who sits in our accustomed seat.

Life is not good. One day it will be good
To die, then live again;
To sleep meanwhile; so, not to feel the wane
Of shrunk leaves dropping in the wood,
Nor hear the foamy lashing of the main,
Nor mark the blackened bean-fields, nor, where stood
Rich ranks of golden grain,
Only dead refuse stubble clothe the plain:
Asleep from risk, asleep from pain.

Christina G. Rossetti

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow, dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina G. Rossetti

NEXT OF KIN

The shadows gather round me, while you are in the sun:
My day is almost ended, but yours is just begun:
The winds are singing to us both and the streams are singing still,
And they fill your heart with music, but mine they cannot fill.

Your home is built in sunlight, mine in another day:
Your home is close at hand, sweet friend, but mine is far away:
Your bark is in the haven where you fain would be:
I must launch out into the deep, across the unknown sea.

You, white as dove or lily or spirit of the light:
I, stained and cold and glad to hide in the cold dark night:
You, joy to many a loving heart and light to many eyes:
I, lonely in the knowledge earth is full of vanities.

Yet when your day is over, as mine is nearly done,
And when your race is finished, as mine is almost run,
You, like me, shall cross your hands and bow your graceful head:
Yea, we twain shall sleep together in an equal bed.

Christina G. Rossetti

From CINO DA PISTOIA

VI. Sonnet

Death is not without but within him

This fairest lady, who, as well I wot,
Found entrance by her beauty to my soul,

Pierced through mine eyes my heart, which erst was whole,
Sorely, yet makes as though she knew it not;
Nay, turns upon me now, to anger wrought;
Dealing me harshness for my pain's best dole,
And is so changed by her own wrath's control,
That I go thence, in my distracted thought
Content to die; and, mourning, cry abroad
On Death, as upon one afar from me;
But Death makes answer from within my heart.
Then, hearing her so hard at hand to be,
I do commend my spirit unto God;
Saying to her too, 'Ease and peace thou art.'

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

A SUPERSCRIPTION

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.
Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart
One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of sighs,—

Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

SONGS OF TRAVEL

VERSE XXI

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

VERSE XXII

He hears with gladdened heart the thunder
  Peal, and loves the falling dew;
He knows the earth above and under—
  Sits and is content to view.
He sits beside the dying ember,
  God for hope and man for friend,
Content to see, glad to remember,
  Expectant of the certain end.

Robert Louis Stevenson

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
  And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson

SUNSET AND MOONRISE

New Year's Eve, 1889

All the west, whereon the sunset sealed the dead year's glorious grave
Fast with seals of light and fire and cloud that light and fire illume,
Glows at heart and kindles earth and heaven with joyous blush and bloom,
Warm and wide as life, and glad of death that only slays to save.
As a tide-reconquered sea-rock lies aflush with the influent wave
Lies the light aflush with darkness, lapped about by lustrous gloom,
Even as life with death, and fame with time, and memory with the tomb
Where a dead man hath for vassals Fame the serf and Time the slave.

Far from earth as heaven, the steadfast light withdrawn, superb, suspense,
Burns in dumb divine expansion of illimitable flower:
Moonrise whets the shadow's edges keen as noontide: hence and thence

Glows the presence from us passing, shines and passes
not the power.
Souls arise whose word remembered is as spirit within the
sense:
All the hours are theirs of all the seasons: death has
but his hour.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

FAITH

I

Doubt no longer that the Highest is the wisest and the
best,
Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy hope or
break thy rest,
Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the shipwreck, or
the rolling
Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or the famine, or
the pest!

II

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower than the heart's
desire!
Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam of
what is higher.
Wait till Death has flung them open, when the man
will make the Maker
Dark no more with human hatreds in the glare of death-
less fire!

Alfred Lord Tennyson

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

I

Will my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights?
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens, of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery clash of meteorites?

II

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate.'

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP D

DEATH

A WISH

I ask not that my bed of death
From bands of greedy heirs be free;
For these besiege the latest breath
Of fortune's favored sons, not me.

I ask not each kind soul to keep
Tearless, when of my death he hears.
Let those who will, if any, weep!
There are worse plagues on earth than tears.

I ask but that my death may find
The freedom to my life denied;
Ask but the folly of mankind
Then, then at last, to quit my side.

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,
The friends who come, and gape, and go;
The ceremonious air of gloom—
All, which makes death a hideous show!

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head, and give
The ill he cannot cure a name.

Nor fetch, to take the accustomed toll,
Of the poor sinner bound for death,
His brother-doctor of the soul,
To canvass with official breath.

The future and its viewless things—
That undiscovered mystery
Which one who feels death's winnowing wings
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Bring none of these; but let me be,
While all around in silence lies,
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more, before my dying eyes,

Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aerial landscape spread—
The world which was ere I was born,
The world which lasts when I am dead;

Which never was the friend of one,
Nor promised love it could not give,
But lit for all its generous sun,
And lived itself, and made us live.

There let me gaze, till I become
In soul, with what I gaze on, wed!
To feel the universe my home;
To have before my mind—instead

Of the sick room, the mortal strife,
The turmoil for a little breath—

The pure eternal course of life,
Not human combatings with death!

Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow
Composed, refreshed, ennobled, clear;
Then willing let my spirit go
To work or wait elsewhere or here!

Matthew Arnold

DEATH

Death! that struck when I was most confiding
In my certain faith of joy to be—
Strike again, Time's withered branch dividing
From the fresh root of Eternity!

Leaves, upon Time's branch, were growing brightly,
Full sap, and full of silver dew;
Birds beneath its shelter gathered nightly;
Daily round its flowers the wild bees flew.

Sorrow passed, and plucked the golden blossom;
Guilt stripped off the foliage in its pride;
But, within its parent's kindly bosom,
Flowed for ever Life's restoring tide.

Little mourned I for the parted gladness,
For the vacant nest and silent song—
Hope was there, and laughed me out of sadness,
Whispering, 'Winter will not linger long!'

And, behold! with tenfold increase blessing,
Spring adorned the beauty-burdened spray;
Wind and rain and fervent heat, caressing,
Lavished glory on that second May!

High it rose—no wingéd grief could sweep it;
Sin was scared to distance with its shine;
Love, and its own life, had power to keep it
From all wrong—from every blight but thine!

Cruel Death! The young leaves droop and languish;
Evening's gentle air may still restore—
No! the morning sunshine mocks my anguish—
Time, for me, must never blossom more!

Strike it down, that other boughs may flourish
Where that perished sapling used to be;
Thus, at least, its mouldering corpse will nourish
That from which it sprung—ETERNITY.

Emily Brontë

THE SLEEP

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this:
"He giveth His belovèd—sleep"?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,

The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown, to light the brows?
"He giveth His belovèd—sleep."

What do we give to our belovèd?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake:
He giveth His belovèd—sleep.

"Sleep soft," beloved! we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep:
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His belovèd—sleep.

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delvèd gold, the wailers heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth His belovèd—sleep.

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap:
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated, overhead,
He giveth His belovèd—sleep.

Ay, men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man
Confirmed in such a rest to keep;
But Angels say, and through the word
I think their happy smile is heard—
"He giveth His belovèd—sleep."

For me, my heart, that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummers leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on his love repose
Who giveth His belovèd—sleep.

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let One, most loving of you all,
Say "Not a tear must o'er her fall!
He giveth His belovèd sleep."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

EVELYN HOPE

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come, at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?

Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush—I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret; go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

Robert Browning

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;

Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

Robert Browning

THE STREAM OF LIFE

O stream descending to the sea,
Thy mossy banks between,
The flow'rets blow, the grasses grow,
The leafy trees are green.

In garden plots the children play,
  The fields the labourers till,
And houses stand on either hand,
  And thou descendest still.

O life descending unto death,
  Our waking eyes behold,
Parent and friend thy lapse attend,
  Companions young and old.

Strong purposes our minds possess,
  Our hearts affections fill,
We toil and earn, we seek and learn,
  And thou descendest still,

O end to which our currents tend,
  Inevitable sea,
To which we flow, what do we know,
  What shall we guess of thee?

A roar we hear upon thy shore,
  As we our course fulfil;
Scarce we divine a sun will shine
  And be above us still.

Arthur Hugh Clough

From ARMOURS DE VOYAGE

Where, upon Apennine slope, with the chestnut the oak-trees immingle,

Where amid odorous copse bridle-paths wander and wind,
Where under mulberry-branches the diligent rivulet sparkles,
Or amid cotton and maize peasants their water-works ply,
Where, over fig-tree and orange in tier upon tier still repeated,
Garden on garden upreared, balconies step to the sky,—
Ah, that I were far away from the crowd and the streets of the city,
Under the vine-trellis laid, O my beloved, with thee!

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE DANCE OF DEATH

(*After Holbein*)

"*Contra vim Mortis Non est medicamen in hortis*"

He is the despots' Despot. All must bide,
Later or soon, the message of his might;
Princes and potentates their heads must hide,
Touched by the awful sigil of his right;
Beside the Kaiser he at eve doth wait
And pours a potion in his cup of state;
The stately Queen his bidding must obey;
No keen-eyed Cardinal shall him affray;
And to the Dame that wantoneth he saith—
"Let be, Sweet-heart, to junket and to play."
There is no king more terrible than Death.

The lusty Lord, rejoicing in his pride,
He draweth down; before the armed Knight
With jingling bridle-rein he still doth ride;
He crosseth the strong Captain in the fight;
The Burgher grave he beckons from debate;
He hales the Abbot by his shaven pate,
Nor for the Abbess' wailing will delay;
No bawling Mendicant shall say him nay;
E'en to the pyx the Priest he followeth,
Nor can the Leech his chilling finger stay . . .
There is no king more terrible than Death.

All things must bow to him. And woe betide
The Wine-bidder,—the Roisterer by night;
Him the feast-master, many bouts defied,
Him 'twixt the pledging and the cup shall smite;
Woe to the Lender at usurious rate,
The hard Rich Man, the hireling Advocate;
Woe to the Judge that selleth Law for pay;
Woe to the Thief that like a beast of prey
With creeping tread the traveller harryeth:—
These, in their sin, the sudden sword shall slay . . .
There is no king more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity,—nor will be denied.
When the low hearth is garnished and bright,
Grimly he flingeth the dim portal wide,
And steals the Infant in the Mother's sight;
He hath no pity for the scorned of fate:—
He spares not Lazarus lying at the gate,

Nay, nor the Blind that stumbleth as he may;
Nay, the tired Ploughman,—at the sinking ray,—
In the last furrow,—feels an icy breath,
And knows a hand hath turned the team astray . . .
There is no king more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity. For the new-made Bride,
Blithe with the promise of her life's delight,
That wanders gladly by her Husband's side,
He with the clatter of his drum doth fright;
He scares the Virgin at the convent grate;
The Maid half-won, the Lover passionate;
He hath no grace for weakness and decay:
The tender Wife, the Widow bent and gray,
The feeble Sire whose footstep faltereth,—
All these he leadeth by the lonely way . . .
There is no king more terrible than Death.

ENVOY

Youth, for whose ear and monishing of late,
I sang of Prodigals and lost estate,
Have thou thy joy of living and be gay;
But know not less that there must come a day,—
Aye, and perchance e'en now it hasteneth,—
When thine own heart shall speak to thee and say,—
There is no king more terrible than Death.

Austin Dobson

BRIC-A-BRAC

I. M.

R. G. C. B.

1878

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
She beckons forth—and strife and song have been.

A summer night descending cool and green
And dark on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
And radiant faces look upon, and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean . . .
The ways of Death are soothing and serene.

William E. Henley

ECHOES XXXV

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city

An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

William E. Henley

From THE SAINTS TRAGEDY

High among the lonely hills,
While I lay beside my sheep,
Rest came down and filled my soul,
From the everlasting deep.

Changeless march the stars above,
Changeless morn succeeds to even;

Still the everlasting hills,
Changeless watch the changeless heaven.

See the rivers, how they run,
Changeless toward a changeless sea;
All around is forethought sure,
Fixed will and stern decree.

Can the sailor move the main?
Will the potter heed the clay?
Mortal! where the spirit drives,
Thither must the wheels obey.

Neither ask, nor fret, nor strive:
Where thy path is, thou shalt go.
He who made the streams of time
Wafts thee down to weal or woe.

Charles Kingsley

A DEATH SONG

What cometh here from west to east a-wending?
And who are these, the marchers stern and slow?
We bear the message that the rich are sending
Aback to those who bade them wake and know.
Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
But one and all if they would dusk the day.

We ask'd them for a life of toilsome earning,
They bade us bide their leisure for our bread;

We crav'd to speak to tell our woeful learning:
We come back speechless, bearing back our dead.

They will not learn; they have no ears to hearken;
They turn their faces from the eyes of fate;
Their gay-lit halls shut out the skies that darken
But, lo! this dead man knocking at the gate.

Here lies the sign that we shall break our prison;
Amidst the storm he won a prisoner's rest;
But in the cloudy dawn the sun arisen
Brings us our day of work to win the best.
Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
But one and all if they would dusk the day.

William Morris

Too soon, too soon comes Death to show
We love more deeply than we know!
The rain, that fell upon the height
Too gently to be called delight,
Within the dark vale reappears
As a wild cataract of tears;
And love in life should strive to see
Sometimes what love in death would be!

Coventry Patmore

SONG

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,

Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain:
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE SUMMER IS ENDED

Wreathe no more lilies in my hair,
For I am dying, Sister sweet:
Or, if you will for the last time
Indeed, why make me fair
Once for my winding-sheet.

Pluck no more roses for my breast,
For I like them fade in my prime:
Or, if you will, why pluck them still,
That they may share my rest
Once more for the last time.

Weep not for me, when I am gone,
Dear tender one, but hope and smile:

Or, if you cannot choose but weep,
A little while weep on,
Only a little while.

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

THE ONE HOPE

When vain desire at last and vain regret
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,—
Or may the soul at once in a green plain
Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scriptured petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
Ah! let none other written spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

From SONGS OF TRAVEL

XX

The morning drum-call on my eager ear
Thrills unforgotten yet; the morning dew
Lies yet undried along my field of noon.

But now I pause at whiles in what I do,
And count the bell, and tremble lest I hear
(My work untrimmed) the sunset gun too soon.

Robert Louis Stevenson

BIRTH AND DEATH

Birth and death, twin-sister and twin-brother,
Night and day, on all things that draw breath,
Reign, while time keeps friends with one another
Birth and death.

Each brow-bound with flowers diverse of wreath,
Heaven they hail as father, earth as mother,
Faithful found above them and beneath.

Smiles may lighten tears, and tears may smother
Smiles, for all that joy or sorrow saith:
Joy nor sorrow knows not from each other

Algernon Charles Swinburne

DEATH AND BIRTH

Death and birth should dwell not near together:
Wealth keeps house not, even for shame, with dearth:
Fate doth ill to link in one brief tether
Death and birth.

Harsh the yoke that binds them, strange the girth
Seems that girds them each with each: yet whether
Death be best, who knows, or life on earth?

Ill the rose-red and the sable feather
Blend in one crown's plume, as grief with mirth:
Ill met still are warm and wintry weather,
Death and birth.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

IN MEMORIAM—XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

SUB-GROUP E

IMMORTALITY

IMMORTALITY

Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, Patience! in another life, we say,
The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn
The world's poor, routed leavings? or will they,
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn?

No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,

From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

Matthew Arnold

THE OLD STOIC

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, 'Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!'

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

Emily Brontë

CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON

I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon grey blank of sky, we might grow faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls; but since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted
And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road,
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said
"Because the way is short, I thank thee, God."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

FUTURITY

And, O belovèd voices, upon which
Ours passionately call because ere long

Ye brake off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch
The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche
In Heaven to hold our idols; and albeit
He brake them to our faces and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty,—glorified
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

PROLOGUE TO LA SAISIAZ

Good, to forgive;
  Best, to forget!
  Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
  Soul, clap thy pinion!
  Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

Wander at will,
  Day after day,—
  Wander away,
Wandering still—
Soul that canst soar!
  Body may slumber:

Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

Waft of soul's wing!
What lies above?
Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring!
Body hides—where?
Ferns of all feather,
Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care!

Robert Browning

From APPARENT FAILURE

It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce:
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

Robert Browning

From OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate—
That, when this life is ended, begins
New work for the soul in another state,

Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins:
Where the strong and the weak, this world's congeries,
Repeat in large what they practised in small,
Through life after life in unlimited series;
Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen
By the means of Evil that Good is best,
And, through earth and its noise, what is heaven's serene,—
When our faith in the same has stood the test—
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,
The uses of labor are surely done;
There remaineth a rest for the people of God:
And I have had troubles enough, for one.

Robert Browning

From RELIGIOUS POEMS

'O THOU OF LITTLE FAITH'

It may be true
That while we walk the troublous tossing sea,
That when we see the o'ertopping waves advance,
And when we feel our feet beneath us sink,
There are who walk beside us; and the cry
That rises so spontaneous to the lips,
The 'Help us or we perish,' is not nought,
An evanescent spectrum of disease.
It may be that indeed and not in fancy,
A hand that is not ours upstays our steps,
A voice that is not ours commands the waves;

Commands the waves, and whispers in our ear,
O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?
At any rate,
That there are beings above us, I believe,
And when we lift up holy hands of prayer,
I will not say they will not give us aid.

Arthur Hugh Clough

From BRIC-A-BRAC

WHAT IS TO COME

What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good—was good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were:
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered . . .
even so.

Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe—
Dear, though it spoil and break us!—need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow:
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare,
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the after-glow
What is to come.

William E. Henley

ON THE DEATH OF LEOPOLD, KING OF THE BELGIANS

A king is dead! Another master mind
Is summoned from the world-wide council hall.
Ah, for some seer, to say what lurks behind—
To read the mystic writing on the wall!

Be still, fond man: nor ask thy fate to know.
Face bravely what each God-sent moment brings.
Above thee rules in love, through weal and woe,
Guiding thy kings and thee, the King of kings.

Charles Kingsley

ANTIPHONY

Haec

In the white-flower'd hawthorn brake,
Love, be merry for my sake;
Twine the blossoms in my hair,
Kiss me where I am most fair—
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

Ille

Nay, the garlanded gold hair
Hides thee where thou art most fair;
Hides the rose-tinged hills of snow—
Ah, sweet love, I have thee now!
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

Haec

Shall we weep for a dead day,
Or set Sorrow in our way?
Hidden by my golden hair,
Wilt thou weep that sweet days wear?
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

Ille

Weep, O Love, the days that flit,
Now, while I can feel thy breath;
Then may I remember it
Sad and old, and near my death.
Kiss me, love, for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

William Morris

A RETROSPECT

I, trusting that the truly sweet
Would still be sweetly found the true,
Sang, darkling, taught by heavenly heat,
Songs which were wiser than I knew.
To the unintelligible dream
That melted like a gliding star,
I said: 'We part to meet, fair Gleam!
You are eternal, for you are.'
To Love's strange riddle, fiery writ
In flesh and spirit of all create,
'Mocker,' I said, 'of mortal wit,
Me you shall not mock. I can wait.'

Coventry Patmore

HEAVEN OVERARCHES

Heaven overarches earth and sea,
  Earth-sadness and sea-bitterness.
Heaven overarches you and me:
A little while and we shall be—
Please God—where there is no more sea
  Nor barren wilderness.

Heaven overarches you and me,
  And all earth's gardens and her graves.
Look up with me, until we see
The day break and the shadows flee.
What though to-night wrecks you and me
  If so to-morrow saves?

Christina G. Rossetti

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

The Choice

III

Think thou and act; to-morrow thou shalt die.
  Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
  Thou say'st: 'Man's measured path is all gone o'er:
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I,
  Even I, am he whom it was destined for.'
  How should this be? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby?

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the grey line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

IF THIS WERE FAITH!

God! if this were enough,
That I see things bare to the buff
And up to the buttocks in mire.
That I ask nor hope nor hire,
Not in the husk,
Nor dawn beyond the dusk,
Nor life beyond death:
God—if this were faith!

Having felt Thy wind in my face
Spit sorrow and disgrace,
Having seen Thy evil doom
In Golgotha and Khartoum,
And the brutes, the work of Thine hands,
Fill with injustice lands
And stain with blood the sea.
If still in my veins the glee
Of the black night and the sun
And the lost battle run;
If, an adept,
The iniquitous lists I still accept

With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good:
God—if that were enough!

If to feel in the ink of the slough
And the sink of the mire
Veins of glory and fire
Run through and transpierce and transpire,
And a secret purpose of glory in every part,
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart;
To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on forever and fail, and go on again,
And be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word
and a thing not seen with the eyes—
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right,
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough:
Lord—if that were enough?

Robert Louis Stevenson

From AFTER SUNSET

III

If light of life outlive the set of sun
That men call death and end of all things,
then
How could not that which life held best for men
And proved most precious, though it seem undone
By force of death and woful victory won,
Be first and surest of revival, when

Death shall bow down to life arisen again?
So shall the soul seen by the self-same one
That looked and spake with even such lips and eyes
As love shall doubt not then to recognize,
And all bright thoughts and smiles of all time past
Revive, transfigured, but in spirit and sense
None other than we knew, for evidence
That love's last mortal word was not his last.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

A DEATH ON EASTER DAY

The strong spring sun rejoicingly may rise,
Rise and make revel, as of old men said,
Like dancing hearts of lovers newly wed:
A light more bright than ever bathed the skies
Departs for all time out of all men's eyes.
The crowns that girt last night a living head
Shine only now, though deathless, on the dead:
Art that mocks death, and Song that never dies.
Albeit the bright sweet mothlike wings be furled,
Hope sees, past all division and defection,
And higher than swims the mist of human breath,
The soul most radiant once in all the world
Requickened to regenerate resurrection
Out of the likeness of the shadow of death.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

'Sappho survives, because we sing her songs;
And Aeschylus, because we read his plays!"

Robert Browning

"The World but feels the present's spell,
The poet feels the past as well;
Whatever men have done, might do
Whatever thought, might think it too."

Matthew Arnold

"The poet hath the child's sight in his breast
And sees all new. What oftenest he has viewed
He views with the first glory."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

"Come, Poet, come! for but in vain
We do the work or feel the pain,
And gather up the evening gain,
Unless before the end thou come
To take, ere they are lost, their sum."

Arthur Hugh Clough

"The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Vex not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:

Vex not thou the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

"God is the perfect poet,
Who in his own person acts his own creations."

Robert Browning

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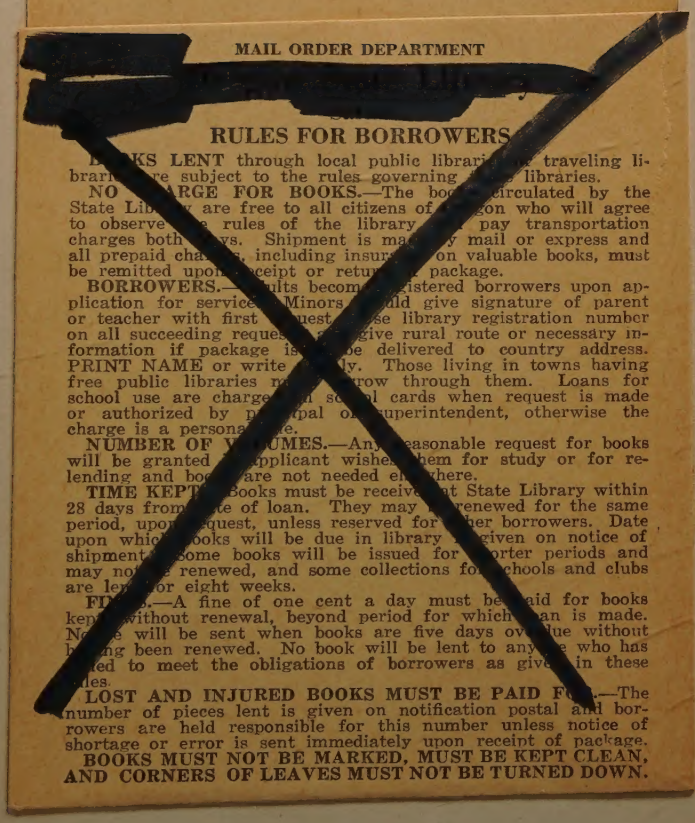

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